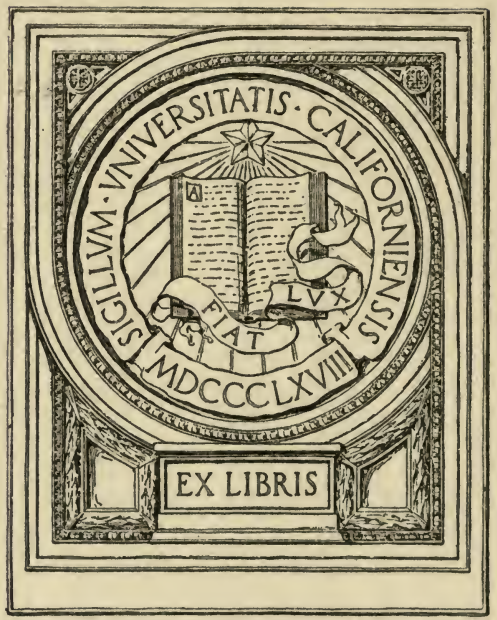
THE ODYSSEY OF A TORPEDOED TRANSPORT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THE ODYSSEY OF A TORPEDOED TRANSPORT

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By

Y. Larroque Maurice

Translated from the French by
Grace Fallow Norton

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PREFACE

THERE seems to be no information concerning the author of these letters save that contained in the letters themselves. They reached the *Revue de Paris* through the friend to whom they were addressed. Their serial publication was interrupted by the censor, but resumed again after several months. It is evident that the idea of publication never once entered the author's head. He was not "literary."

But he had a great relish for life, a fresh, huge appetite for the daily doings of the winch, the horizontal shaft, and the weather; and a positive passion for human nature — for his crew, his Hindus, for what the "big vegetable" said and what the little lady did, for what Plantat, Flannigan, and Mousseaux thought, for Villiers, with his unanswerable arguments and his multicolored *lingerie*, and above all, for the pasha — Fourgues. Y. was impelled to write of all these things, partly for the pleasure of living every detail over again and partly in order to sense fully his captain, who was so important to him, whom he enjoyed so much and whom he saw so clearly. For Y., in the process of becoming a man, felt Fourgues to be a real one and was reaching for Fourgues' qualities. Some way or other he imparts his relish and his admiration to

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those who come to his artless pages. He imparts his amusement, his heartache, his sense of his fate, his struggle with his pride. For he sincerely longed to count. He never questions the cause of France. That is beyond discussion, though he grumbles whole-heartedly about French policies. It does him no injustice to say that he had to struggle with the idea of Reward and Place. Some small recognition of the part he was playing would have been so sweet to him! He received none. But to believe in one's work is the sweetest reward one can have and he had this reward at last, for he came to believe in the Merchant Marine.

He said, in anguish, "All we shall have for our funeral oration will be silence everywhere." But he had already written his own epitaph and that of his brave companions: "You know what professional honor is!"

G. F. N.

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PART ONE

Coast of Morocco
August 22, 1914
On board the Pamir

My dear Friend, —

You must have been wondering what became of me in all this scuffle. It is rather far back, is n't it, our Fourteenth of July in New Orleans when we said good-bye at the Dollar Bar after a cake-walk to the sound of the gramophone? I am going to tell you everything all in a lump!

The Pamir was loading her cotton — five thousand bales — up to the twenty-fifth of July. It was pretty hot and we were in haste to get off for Liverpool and find cooler weather. The news, too, seemed somewhat explosive. American journals were making a noise in big headlines over Serbia and the rest, but it was considered a bluff of the pro-German press and the Hearst crowd. Nevertheless, we were glad to be going to see what was taking place in France and the faces of countrymen.

We got under way at 2 A.M. At the start a big water-bruiser just missed ramming us, but the pasha

manœuvred well. I took the watch at three o'clock in the place of Blangy, who was having a touch of fever and had been stuffing himself with quinine for two days.

What beating sun in the Gulf of Mexico! Ninety-five on the bridge, one hundred and four in the cabin — not a breath of wind! In the Atlantic it freshened up a bit and Blangy resumed service.

The boat ran ten knots strong, but at the end of three days you should have seen our engine wind itself up so as to smash everything! The horizontal shaft broke off short about a yard from the thrust bearing. We must have run into a submerged wreck which had blocked the screw. It would n't surprise me if a piece of the screw had gone to the bottom.

Impossible to call for help, as we have no wireless! Muriac, the engineer, was a wonder. He found some way of forging on our wretched anvil a couple of iron collars which he riveted onto the two stumps of the shaft with eight bolts. That took two days. You can imagine how the pasha Fourgues grumbled to see himself stopped like a box in the middle of the tub. Can't you just see him, with his slant eyes and his goatee, shouting down the engine-room hatch every five minutes: —

"Eh, down there! Muriac! Will your turnspit be ready to turn by the time the grapes are ripe?"

"Another hour — maybe two!" yells Muriac. "But you'd do better to leave us alone!"

We got under way again after having drifted fifty

miles to the west. Fourgues was afraid the engines would not give their ten knots any more, but the shaft was solider than ever.

All this delayed us. On the night of the seventh of August we entered the Irish Channel and looked for lights. *Macache!* I had the watch and for three hours Fourgues abused me as he knows how to do, because I could not see a lighthouse or anything else.

"Who wished this kind of a blind man onto me? Go and have your eyes changed! Go back on land! I wish you would! Get inside anyway — you'll find some lighthouses in there maybe! Yes, and you've made us lose three hours. This trip will never end!"

He could n't see the lighthouses any more than I and that was why he called me down. We had got almost near enough to touch land; you could see it, like a wharf — but no more light than my hand — when, all of a sudden, a craft going at full speed overhauled us! It had lights which went on and off. Fourgues did not budge because they could see him from the port side. I kept on with my little old course. *Bang! Bang!* The ship fired two blank shots.

"The devil!" said Fourgues. "We have struck the destroyers at practice. There must be others. Keep your eyes open, my boy."

I kept my eyes open. *Bang!* A shell fell ten yards ahead of us. The destroyer came up and yelled through the megaphone: —

"Stop! Or we'll sink you!"

You can imagine that we stopped. The destroyer came alongside. There was nothing to see except two *escarbilles* now and then.

"Who are you?"

"Pamir, French cargo boat with cotton from America for Liverpool. Why do you stop us?"

"Oh! You're French, are you?"

"Yes!"

"All right! War is declared!"

"Good God!" cried Fourgues and I at the same time and he fell on me and hugged me.

"*Ça y est*, my boy! We are having it out with the Boches!"

"What are you going to do?" yelled the destroyer.

"Go back to France!" answered Fourgues immediately, and added: —

"Is England with us?"

"Yes, of course."

"Hurrah!" cried Fourgues. "Hard aport and *en route* for H——. We'll go and report to the navy."

The destroyer accompanied us a little way and finally left us, calling: —

"Good-bye and good luck, fellows!"

"Thanks. Same to you!"

There is no denying it, Fourgues is a good sport. No hesitation about his turning back to France! He slapped me on the back, offered me cigars, and joked on the bridge.

"You were right, there were n't any lights! Ex-

cept when they lit up their *rostauds* for the Boches! Tumble down, my boy, and tell Muriac and Blangy. Rout them out if they are asleep. How their eyes will stick out! Send them to the bridge and come on up with a bottle of champagne. It's my treat!"

Blangy and Muriac made no objections; the guns had awakened them, but they supposed it was manœuvres.

"You're not going to show us a ship?" they both said.

"No, it's not a joke. The pasha will tell you."

Every one embraced every one else. No one slept any more. On the bridge Fourgues was going to pour the champagne, but he spilled it on our hands in the dark, he was trembling so with emotion. We drank what was left.

"With all this," he said, "we don't know when the thing started. Don't we look stupid without a radio or anything! We might just as well have fallen among the Boches! But it does n't matter, the English are right there! What might not happen if they had left us in the lurch?"

"And the Russians?" queried Muriac.

"No danger!" said Fourgues. "We are all going in together."

"And the Italians?" said Blangy.

"That's less certain. We must get some information. Could you hit it up a bit, Muriac?"

"We'll try up to eleven knots. The coal is good and the shaft will hold."

"All right. Let her go! We must get to H—— to-morrow."

We put on all the speed that was possible. As for me, I didn't sleep. I was counting on a leave in August while the boilers were being cleaned and was going home, to La Rochelle. You know why, old man. I told you about it in New Orleans; it was for this year. What was she going to say, the poor little thing? I had left without seeing her.

The Pamir reached H—— at nine in the morning. Fourgues went to the Naval Préfecture and returned at noon with the daily papers and the news.

"No one knows what is to be done with the Pamir. We have to wait for orders. I telegraphed the owner; I asked the admiral to unload the cotton. They told me to keep it pending further instructions. We are forbidden to do anything. No examination of our engines or boiler! Muriac, your shaft will be looked after later! This afternoon a naval officer will come on board to decide upon the destination of officers and crew."

If we had not been at war Fourgues would have fumed. To lay up with five thousand bales of cotton in the hold, to let the boilers and shaft go and not to know what we were going to do the next day! But he took it very well, even not being allowed to go ashore and the order to keep up steam.

The naval officer, one with five stripes, came about three o'clock. He had the crew assembled, looked at the certificates, and in half an hour the accounts were

settled. Muriac left, Blangy also. Half the deck crew and three quarters of the engine-room force packed up and landed. The officer said that it was to man the war-vessels and coast-defences. He told us to leave that very evening for the port of —— in Morocco, where we should receive further orders. Fourgues jumped a little.

"See here! You want me to run over to Morocco with two officers and half a crew or less?"

"We need the officers. Ships of war come first. Those registered in the marine serve in the fleet, officers and sailors. As for men, we will send you in five hours a contingent of reservists, five seamen and ten for the engine-room."

"Might just as well leave me mine, who know the ship! My shaft is broken, my boilers are rotten!"

"Pshaw! You'll make it!"

"But the coal? And the provisions?"

"Go ahead; you can provision *en route* if necessary. You are needed in Morocco."

"To do what?"

"You will receive orders."

"Can you let me have charts for Morocco? I have only those of America or Europe."

"We'll see. I don't believe there are any left. We gave them all to the battleships."

"I have n't any wireless."

"What's the need? Are you afraid the Germans will get you? We'll take care of that!"

"And my five thousand bales of cotton?"

"There is nothing to do but go. In short, hold yourself in readiness to get under way at six o'clock, as soon as you have received your reservists. Do you understand?"

"All right."

"Send your men along in my boat. I still have three ships to inspect."

Muriac, Blangy, and the crew packed up in five seconds, believe me. There was not even time to shake hands. What was going to become of those fellows?

"That's all right," Fourgues said to me when we were alone again. "You can take charge of the engines and we will take turns on the watch — the two of us — unless they send us some one who knows starboard from port. Hurry up! Go and write home — I'm going to do the same. It's two years since I've seen my wife and the children at Orange. And you, poor kid — engaged! Oh, well, it does n't matter! I am satisfied. They'll see that the old Pamir can account for herself."

He shook my hand. We both of us wanted to weep. To start like that, with a damned ramshackle ship! We went down; he wrote to Orange, I wrote to La Rochelle — not much, you know; just to say that we were there and to address us at the Navy Department with "Please forward" in large letters on the envelope. And then the reservists arrived. What would they send us?

I can see now why they keep the regular seamen in the navy. The others are such elephants! For

the deck, there was a *croupier* from Deauville, a motorman, a news-dealer, a department-store clerk, a cabby, a movie-operator, three delivery-men, a bill-poster, a cattle-dealer, and three more of the same sort. What do they remember about the navy? They arrived, stupid, fat, and full of questions. There was no time wasted. The elevator and the movie are to look out for the fires, the motorman has the helm, the movie-man also has the dynamo. I forgot the head cook of the Hotel Romantic at Monte Carlo! We annexed him for the officers' table. If he can get along with beans and canned monkey, he is a wizard. As to Fabrice, whom you may remember, — the little *fafa* who made such good cocktails at Galveston, — he returned to the cathead.

The Pamir left H—— at exactly six o'clock. Not necessary to add that Fourgues and I did not shut an eye during the trip. Twelve hours' watch apiece out of the twenty-four and beastly weather. The rest of the time I spent in the engine-room in overalls trying to guard against overheating and leaks. At the school of hydrography one learns little about mechanics — I am the more aware of this, having forgotten everything! The first day we had condensation in the pressure cylinder, which struck the cap till I thought the old box would blow up. We were obliged to reduce speed and empty it out. The engine-room filled with steam. All the reservists ran off, yelling like skunks. With the old Pamir men we patched everything up and the next day it was

the tubes of boiler 3 which began to burst. That's the old one and it ought to be re-tubed right away. The cattle-dealer, who had his training in the commissariat, did not know where the cocks of the cylinder were. When one had emptied itself he simply let it go. The gauge fell to zero and you can imagine what happened. We drew the fire under one boiler and after that made not more than seven knots. In the Gulf of Gascony we had a hard wind. The delivery-man and the bill-poster came out of the furnace-room half dead, spitting blood and coal-dust by the quart, so now there was no way of getting the coal on the fire. Our stokers were simply unable to stoke. They would get a load and then fall down with each shovelful, sending the fuel everywhere except into the mouth of the furnace. Fourgues reduced to five knots.

With such a crew he was afraid the trip would take a month, for which we had neither provisions nor coal. So he put in at the port of —— and was rather badly received. In the first place, it was Sunday and they wanted to know why he came bothering people then instead of on a week-day. He must have handed them something, but I was not able to hear what. They gave him permission to get the provisions, but as for coal, *barca!*

"What!" says he, "you have heaps there! Can't you give me half of one pile?"

"Impossible. What you see there belongs to the mobilization."

"*Eh bien!* We are not merely mobilized, we are at war!"

"Possibly, but this is stock belonging to the mobilization — which means that it can't be touched."

There was no way out of it. But of what use is coal which is there for war, but which cannot be given out in time of war? The Pamir sailed after eight hours in port. We got some provisions. Fourgues telegraphed to the office for money to be sent to Morocco. We were broke, and we had to eat down there and pay for coal and get water and everything.

The rest of the passage was so-so, between five and six knots. The bearings got hot, the grease ran short, the pump was clogged, and there were three feet of water under the planks of the stoke-hole. You can imagine the smell. Muriac had the right of it; he would never let any one put a nose into his shop, but just the same things went! As for me, I give it up. Bridge and engine, the watch — it was enough to drive a man crazy! Blangy was lucky. By this time he must be on a Government ship with a regular staff. I wonder why it was he instead of I who went. We belong to the same class; only he gave his certificate to the officer at H—— first and was already arranged for when I handed in mine. They promised well, old man, but much water will pass under the Pamir before they give us any officers.

We reached Morocco day before yesterday. How did we get into the harbor? Ask Fourgues! We did n't get the charts at H—— after all, and had

nothing but the tract-chart of the Atlantic, where the coast of Morocco occupies about half an inch. The bottom is bad, the coast is flat. We spent a day and a night wandering around in sight of beaches with three cacti and a palm. Fourgues did n't want to get into the wrong port and at a distance they all looked alike. No way to get our bearings — clouds or fog all the time. Fortunately we came upon an American who signalled our position to us and the route to follow. And that's how the Pamir got in.

In port everybody had skipped to France by the last boat. There was one army officer, one *premier maître de marine*, and no one else. They asked us what we were going to do and if we had any military supplies.

"Supplies!" cried Fourgues. "Five thousand bales of cotton, boilers shaken to pieces, nothing more to eat, some scrapings of coal, and not a cent in the till!"

"What the devil are you going to do in Morocco then?"

"I was sent here from H—— and they said there would be orders here for the Pamir."

"First we've heard of it. Wait awhile and we'll find something for you to do."

And so, old fellow, you see why I write you from Morocco. We are waiting for the orders which have been demanded in Paris, in Rabat, and in Tangiers. Nothing comes. Fourgues will never recover his temper again. Our cotton has begun to heat, for it is

warm here. Half the reservists are on their backs, — diarrhœa, gastric troubles, general slump. You ought to hear them. Impossible to go anywhere or to unload, for we were told to be ready to start on two hours' notice. As for me, I slept for nearly thirty-six — I had had my share! Fourgues is very nice to me. He takes it out on the reservists, and what does n't he hand out to them! He is dead right. All those fellows thought they were going to have an easy time and they need to be jacked up.

You can call yourself in luck, having me write you such a long letter. But I am bored to death and I want to know what has become of you and the fellows. A ship from the south is passing to-morrow and I shall send this at a chance. I address it to your family, hoping they will see that it reaches you. Would you like it if we were to write each other once a month as before? I will try to. Shake!

Port of K——, Mediterranean
October 5, 1914

My dear Friend, —

And so you too were taken from your ship, like Blangy! (By the way, I have received nothing from him, not even a card. His laziness has got the better of him again evidently.) All the same, I wish I might see you on your battleship, in a double-turret, on the lookout for twelve hours out of the twenty-four — which would bore you, my poor old fellow, who told me in New Orleans how you were soon going

to command a Chilian sailing-vessel — "And tack about like this and let out the sheets like that!" I can still hear you. And now you are a gunner! They must need excellent observers on your battleships, and I remember that with the sextant and the table of logarithms you used to beat us all. To find your position within half a mile in twelve minutes was your motto. But it must embarrass you not to be able to smoke your pipe. Never mind! As a hooker, the battleship Auvergne is right there — the very latest thing! I saw her launched. The accommodations, too, must be rather good, and one of these fine days you will send a few carefully selected prunes at the Austro-Boches along the coast off Pola or Cattaro. You won't miss them, will you, as in the cases of the Goeben and the Breslau? Taking it all in all, I don't pity you.

As to the Pamir, they let us pitch at anchor for ten days there in Morocco. We rolled from one side to the other, notwithstanding our five thousand bales of cotton. I would n't have believed there was so much swell on that damned coast. I recommend it to you for loading! You have to look smart or you demolish your tackle, your derrick, and the whole shop, and get your load in your face. The stupidest part of it is that when there is n't a cloud nor so much as a wisp of breeze, you still get rollers and rollers, high as houses, from the sea. Furniture, dishes, books — all tumble to the floor. In dead calms you would think you were in an Indo-Chinese monsoon.

They had no idea what to do with us down there. Fourgues would not set foot on land again, he was so furious at being away off with a lot of Arabs while others were working in France. And then what arias to get coal! There was a German ship of the Woermann line in the road, which had been stuck ever since the mobilization, hold and bunkers full of coal. All that was necessary was to take it! Oh, dear, no! Must n't touch the Boche even for a lump or a tarpaulin! The Boche is sacred! This ship carried bananas and peanuts. All had rotted on the spot and you could smell them for two miles.

All the same, Fourgues made so much music about the coal that they gave him some. We really could not go as far as Gibraltar! We took some from the dock, from a heap intended for the expeditionary corps. You can imagine all the papers that were necessary, and besides, they counted the sacks — just enough to get us to our destination. If the Pamir had taken one more day, she would have stopped short like a sailing vessel on the Equator.

Finally, one day, we were told to light out for Oran, to transport Algerian troops. At the last moment a counter-order! Two days later, order to leave for Dakar and to put ourselves at the service of the navy down there. We had weighed anchor, but not yet stowed it when they signalled us to let go again where we were. Five days passed. No news, no letters from home. We got down in the mouth. Fourgues stayed in his cabin, playing

solitaire, swearing like a pagan. I gave lectures on the reservoirs, their drain-pipes and valves. Muriac would have been amused to hear me explaining the mechanism. The rest of the time I played the mandolin, but enthusiasm was lacking, and, moreover, a good deal would have been necessary to keep up the tinkle-tinkle, hanging on to the wall every ten measures to keep from sliding down with the rollers. Finally I played lying down! One fine morning they ordered us to get under way in a hurry and set out for T——, twenty miles to the north, to transport a tribe of Germans driven out of Morocco. Dirty work, but just the same we were glad to be moving. What a stinking anchorage at T——, — straight coast, open roadstead, no anchor-hold, a swell and a pebbly bar! Lovely! We are beginning to learn what rolling from side to side means.

On land there were about fifty Boches with all their goods — furniture, pianos, trunks, piled high, a regular moving. The Germans in Morocco were well preserved. They have all passed the military age, for it is so written in their papers — the youngest was fifty. You who are a physiognomist would have put him down at thirty-five. The authorities ordered us to treat them with respect on account of an article in the international law, and to give them accommodations, not as prisoners, but as passengers "under surveillance." Fourgues, who hates underhand dealing, said that he was not going to inconvenience the crew for the Boches and that he should

instal them on the deck. Then he was told to construct wooden shelters on the deck, for dormitories and cabins. He said he had no wood for the purpose, so they sent him planks and new joists and some military carpenters, and in forty-eight hours the entire deck from the smokestack to the stern was covered over with a fine cabin. We looked like one of those river wash-houses.

But that was n't all. There was the furniture of these gentlemen, enough to fill a train, and they did not want it broken. Fourgues had planned to pile it pell-mell into the bow and then lash it above the main hatch.

"You see, my boy," he said to me, pulling his goatee, "there won't be much left of their fiddle-faddles if we get a good southwest wind in our backs. There will be just enough to make matches."

Unfortunately, in the first batch there was a piano. We slung and hoisted it with tackle, and in spite of the swell it was not going badly and had gotten over the hatch. But as it began to descend, what did the cable do but mix itself up with the winch and stop short, our piano in the air. Three fine swells came along and everybody hung on to keep the thing from falling. The piano swung once, then once more, and then *bang* onto the port railing. The lid and cover flew off. *Bang* to starboard! The piano veered, the black and white keys chased themselves over the deck, the strings snapped one after the other like a machine gun, and the whole shop

tumbled down. It looked like a dead pack-horse. Fourgues shook with silent laughter and turned as red as a tomato. As for me, I simply could not hold in and the crew howled for joy. But the owner, a Boche in spectacles, raised the deuce. He shot volleys of insults at us, but fortunately he spoke in his own disgusting language, for Fourgues was beginning to get into a rage and would have sent him overboard without hesitation if he had understood a single word. It was just before the Marne and the Boches were snapping their fingers at us, you see. This particular one went on land shaking his fist. We dumped what remained of the piano into the sea and loaded on the rest of the furniture, and the next day we received an order to put all their stuff in the hold. It was a little adjutant who came to announce this to Fourgues. He was well received:

"I am loaded to the hatches with cotton and I won't unload a single bale. Even if you bring me a written order, I forbid my men to touch it without the order of my owner. I can't keep you from carrying off my cotton, but you will have to furnish the men."

Well, then, a gang from land came and unloaded half the hold. I wonder what in the world they did with it! We stowed the stuff as well as we could. To be sure, several chairs and valises went overboard, but nobody went after them. The Boches asked — but they did not ask Fourgues — to be given some bales of cotton for mattresses. So during the

entire voyage they slept like pigs in clover while we were on the company's sea-biscuit as usual.

On the whole, it passed off very well. At the first meal they were rather high-handed. One of them, an old one, had the face to go on the bridge afterwards and tell Fourgues that there was n't anything to eat, that Germans had to have beer instead of water, and that all these from Hamburg and Leipsic and elsewhere were gentlemen of rank who had helped France conquer Morocco and had colonized there because France lacked the ability to do so and that they understood they were to be treated with respect. It was worth a seat to see Fourgues during this little discourse. He put his hands in his pockets in order not to pitch the man of beer overboard. When the other had finished, Fourgues answered in his little calm voice, the one he uses, you know, when he is in such a rage that he is absolutely unemphatic: —

"The first person, you or another, who makes any complaint I shall put into the hold with the furniture. If you don't like the food of the crew, you are not obliged to eat it. I won't have one of you speak to me. This officer is to look after you. Get to h—— off the bridge!"

They were quite subdued and we heard no more from them. They attended to their little affairs in their wooden stable and they slept. Easy enough to manage, these folks, when you scare them a bit. The old man would ask me politely when they wanted anything: —

"*Could* you add a little sugar to the coffee? *Could* you sell us some matches?"

The latter was in order to start conversation, for afterwards he always asked me if the Pamir were surely going back to France.

"Why do you wish to know?"

"Just because! Honestly, you are n't going to a neutral port, are you?"

"No, we are bound for France."

"And where?"

"If you know the country, you will recognize it."

"All right, and I may tell my friends that we are not going to a neutral country?"

After the fifth or sixth time I told Fourgues about this.

"*Parbleu!*" he said; "all these rascals are of military age. If we landed them in Spain they would have to hurry over and take a taste of our 75's. They prefer a season in France even though they are interned. They know we are much too stupid to hurt them."

Fourgues was right. When I said as much to the old Boche, he smiled without answering. We landed them at —— and they have gone to hang themselves somewhere else. And whew! but their quarters were filthy! We had to wash and scour for two days and it still smells.

You can be sure that the owner arrived by the first train. He was beginning to ask himself what had become of the Pamir and he did n't at all like losing

money. His first interview with Fourgues was a little stormy. He did n't quite dare reproach him for having turned about before Liverpool because that would have been a little too strong, but just the same he snapped: —

"You might just as well have gone on to your destination. Two days more or less is n't anything."

"It would n't have happened," said Fourgues, "if the horizontal shaft had n't broken in the middle of the Atlantic. Muriac got us out of that splendidly, but with all respect to you, the whole engine is falling to pieces."

"At least," said the other, "you have your five thousand bales of cotton."

"Five thousand! Minus fifteen hundred which are high and dry in Morocco!"

Well, sir, that hurt! He went 'way up in the air. It had to be explained ten times, with the adjutant's written order and all the rest of the red tape.

"Fifteen hundred bales of cotton gone! Fifteen hundred bales of cotton gone!" He kept repeating it over and over.

Then Fourgues, who had had all he could stand ever since Morocco, put it to him straight and told him to his face that if he did n't like the way things had been run, he could hand the Pamir and her engine and her cotton over to some one else, and that without officers or crew it was pretty rough to be blamed. The owner was scared. He slapped the pasha on the shoulder and said: —

"We'll arrange all that, my good friend. Don't get excited. It's all right — everything I said was meant for the stockholders. You have been quite in order. I am going to see the admiral. The Government will look after everything and we'll try to have the Pamir chartered or some other arrangement made."

He went away as sweet as honey, but I know what that means — it's going to cost the Princess[1] dear! He must have moved heaven and earth, for the next day a post captain came on board to ask Fourgues how much coal he could take.

"Three thousand tons!"

"The Government engages you to carry coal to the navy. Lighters will come alongside at noon and you are to load at once."

"And where shall I put it? I have one hold full and the other half-full of cotton."

Then the captain began to storm and said that he had been disturbed for nothing and that he did n't know where to put the cotton, and that Fourgues ought to have been able to get rid of it all in Morocco, and that there was n't any sense in a boat that was neither full nor empty. They don't mince their words in the navy when they are talking to the merchant marine. But Fourgues took it with good grace because he had an idea that he could get down to Orange and so he did n't care. Moreover, he knew the owner could arrange it all with the authorities much better than he. No time was lost. The owner

[1] The Government.

returned the next day and said that after consultation it had been agreed that the forward hold was to be emptied and loaded with fifteen hundred tons of special coal for torpedo-boats, but that the cotton should be left aft. After having supplied the navy, the Pamir would go to England and unload her cotton at Liverpool in order that all might not be lost, and then get more coal at Cardiff and go again to the navy.

"In this way my interests and those of the Government are mutually protected. I sell only half my cotton and you get a load of coal at Cardiff at a cheap rate."

I should like very much to know how much he made them pay him for our promenade over to Morocco and the fifteen hundred bales of cotton that were left behind and the chartering of the Pamir. He could not have lost because he went away very sprightly after authorizing Fourgues to go to Orange. So I am here alone with ship, engine, loading, and everything. As for La Rochelle, it's all up. The coal is due to-morrow at 4 A.M.

Fourgues has just gone and I am in charge. There had to be a war for me to get a command! Well, perhaps I shall see your Auvergne down there and we shall swap stories. So long, old pal.

Cardiff, November 15, 1914

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

Will you believe that I almost saw your battleship? It was just as we entered the Adriatic south of

Leuca. At dawn I was on the watch and I saw some smoke in the north — the kind that only warships know how to make. Afterwards I saw the masts and smokestacks of three big barks which were going along one after the other. Fourgues thought it was a division of the big fellows bound for Malta to coal. He is pretty sharp — for at Liverpool I received your letter dated in Malta five days after this encounter. I will speak of your letter later, but first let me tell you of affairs on the Pamir.

I thought we should never be done loading coal at K——. Fifteen hundred tons is n't very much. In England or America it would n't have taken more than a morning. There you are tied to a wharf, the cars come, you capsize them into the hold, and when one train is empty another pulls up.

At K—— it took three full days, which is as much as to say that we put it in with a teaspoon. In the first place, they left us attached to a buoy out in the harbor and the lighters came now and then in a sort of happy-go-lucky fashion. They had a gang on board of the kind that does n't get blistered, who stuffed the coal into sacks with shovels and then loaded them on with a windlass, ten at a time. There were other men in the hold who undid the sacks, emptied and shook them out, hung them up on the hook and sent them out again. While the emptying was going on the windlass kept on running just the same. I understand now why coal costs the navy so much!

That was not all. The port told us that we were to

carry coal in briquettes especially for torpedo-boats, so of course I expected briquettes. Not at all! Ten lighters arrived loaded with lump coal. I say lump coal, but I might better call it dust. It must have been there for several years, rotting in the yard. I shouted to the captain of the tug that there had been a mistake and that his dust must be for some other boat.

He asked me if I were the Pamir. Yes, indeed, I said, could n't he read the name? Then he answered that his papers were for the Pamir. He added that the briquettes would arrive later.

The moment there is a paper I go ahead: briquettes or coal-dust, they're all cargo! It took two days for a thousand tons and the head of the gang thought that was going fast! What would he catch from the boss, I wonder, if the Pamir had to pay two days' anchorage for four shovelfuls of coal?

"But," I asked, "is n't this coal for the torpedo-boats and is n't it true that they don't use anything but briquettes?"

"You'll find them all down there, cruisers and warships. They eat anything. And, anyway, these ten lighters were ready and we had to send you a thousand tons, so we took the first thing at hand."

They don't worry about things at K——, believe me! The briquettes arrived the third day and it was necessary to flatten out the coal-dust, which was piled up like a sugar-loaf, so that they should not tumble to the bottom of the hold. We must n't

break them, said the foreman, because that ruined them. But only the tops of the lighters were stowed, all fine and proper, with whole briquettes. (It was fine coal, too, Grand-Combe and Lens, on the top of the basket.) But after two or three layers there was nothing but leavings, pieces as big as your fist, and in the bottom — mud — which we had to take just the same because the order read to send the lighters back well scraped out. If everybody scrapes them why should there be any mud? It will be nice in the furnaces of the torpedo-boats! Do you recall the cases of oranges we bought at Carthagena: the top layers so wonderful, the bottom rotten? So it was with their coal.

Fourgues came at seven that evening and we left at eight. Now he is indifferent. He saw his people at Orange and found everything all right and brought back with him a lot of the macaroons they make at Aix and a cask of *marc*. He has not been angry once during the whole voyage, and what is more, he has promised me on his word of honor that it will be my turn next time. With all his faults he is not a liar! After three or four months I shall make a trip home and perhaps I shall have been able to put enough aside to get married. We shall see.

Things are going better all the same. At K—— the navy gave us a reservist quartermaster. He is the owner of boats on the Seine and caught on quickly. As far as Liverpool we divided the watch among the three of us and so could breathe. During

the trip I taught the motorman the rules of navigation, lights, whistles, etc. From Liverpool to Cardiff he took the watch under Fourgues' supervision and got along well enough. He will watch by himself on the return voyage and you can see your old chum beginning to revive.

At K—— there was an engineer who came to look at our broken shaft and repairs. He found it rather rustic (as he termed it) and had a new collar made for us, all polished and well-turned with a guard and a brake. It was a bit too fancy to be solid and started in playing tricks. At the first shot the two pieces of the shaft began to turn separately. Fortunately I had kept Muriac's stumps.

The Pamir was ordered to take the route to Antipaxos. She made her ten knots and arrived without too much trouble. The reservists are beginning to get on. I forgot to say that the bursted tubes of boiler 3 have been changed. It is n't perfect, but if the cord does n't get pulled too hard, we can wait awhile for new tubes. We arrived at Antipaxos at two o'clock in the morning. Why do they make us sail with all lights on when the ships of war have all lights out? We are good game, too, and it is impossible to tell what one is going into. During the last night, with the sky overcast so that there was no seeing ahead, suddenly I smelt smoke right in my face, on the starboard bow. Well, old man, it was one of your cruisers with twenty-six smokestacks which had just cut across our course at fifty yards and which

sent its searchlights into my eyes. I had n't seen a thing! You could have knocked me flat! Really, they might at least hang out a kerosene lantern when they are going to do things like that. I know that their officers watch, but just the same, one of these days there is going to be a collision.

Before Antipaxos a destroyer ran for us full speed. We hoisted our number. She stopped on the port side at ten yards. The commander looked furious.

"Are you the Pamir? You ought to go to Fano."

"At K——," answered Fourgues, "they said Antipaxos!"

"It's the Marguerite which should go to Antipaxos. We have been calling all night."

"But look, commander, I have no wireless!"

"Yes, I see. All you water-bruisers are alike! Well, come along, follow me. How much coal have you?"

"Fifteen hundred tons."

"Good! You are to coal the cruiser Lamartine, there behind the point."

"Yes, but the top of my hold has briquettes for torpedo-boats!"

This did not make the commander of the destroyer any more serene. He reflected awhile and then swore.

"Well, so much the worse. The Lamartine has been waiting since yesterday and she has to sail north to-day. She'll take your briquettes and to-morrow you can give your lump coal to some other."

"All right," said Fourgues.

And without ever anchoring we started for the Lamartine, which was adrift behind the point.

At a thousand yards they made us stop because an officer from on board was coming over in a launch to assist in the manœuvre. They might just as well have kept him. We have only one screw, not three like a cruiser, and the Pamir, with three thousand tons in her holds, won't turn like a top. But the officer wanted to mix in. Fourgues began by spilling over and was told that in time of war the merchant marine must contain itself. When he saw that things were not going to be serious, he let the officer go ahead.

"Go ahead! Astern! Hard astarboard! But your ship does n't obey! Astern! Astern! My God —"

Boom! You bet she stopped, the old Pamir! It was lucky the Lamartine was armored! Otherwise we should have walked right into her as far as the steps of the masts! Anyway, we rammed her. We broke the two first hawsers, new steel ones, and we scraped her a little. And, oh, my! what knobby things you have sticking out all over your boats — turrets, guns, catheads, bridges!

The Pamir struck some of these with her starboard lifeboat which tumbled between us and cracked like a nut. This deadened the shock somewhat, but our davits were twisted and we can't hang another lifeboat up there in a hurry.

The cruiser began to load her coal at seven in the morning and by three in the afternoon, taking out

time for lunch, had swallowed her thousand tons, briquettes first, lumps next. How the crew did it I don't see. Only think, they had thirty days of cruising in their legs and yet they grubbed that out in seven hours! If you have that kind on the Auvergne you can be proud of them. What I want to know is if your naval constructors spent their time trying to invent complications for the entrance of the coal. They certainly never could have handled coal themselves or they would have arranged things differently. Now, it is as though in moving into a house you tried to put the furniture down the chimney.

I wanted to follow a load of coal from the hold of the Pamir into the hold of the Lamartine, but it would have been worth as much to find the exit of the maze at the Crystal Palace — only it was dirtier.

And then, do you too trail your coal around in hampers, like those in which the negroes of the Antilles carry bananas? It is like trying to empty the Mississippi with a cocktail straw. The hampers break — this breaks the backs of the men — and as for dust — ! The English and the Germans do better than this, it must be admitted. With their transporter (*temperly*) the coal rises like an elevator and their ways of getting into the hold are less outlandish. I await details from you, for perhaps I am mistaken.

The Lamartine sent us to anchor for the night on a plateau of rocks, saying that another cruiser would come on the following day to take what was left. Hardly time to say *Ugh!* and she was gone in the fog.

Fourgues anchored and in a hurry, very glad to draw breath and smoke a pipe in peace.

We cleaned up and he had half a gill of *marc* sent to the bridge, which we took in coffee to get the coal out of our mouths, and then we chatted till supper. The fog lifted for the sunset and we were both struck dumb. You are lucky to be seeing that every evening! Fourgues wanted to be offish and say that in the Rhone Valley and at Marseilles, on the days of the mistral, the sunsets are better than that. He bragged about them. As for me, I know this beat the Antilles and the Gulf of Bengal. There was not more light and not as bright colors, but it was like velvet. And is n't it good of me to tell you all about it when you have seen it every night for three months! But I shall be happy to go back there again to look at those sunsets while I think of home.

The next morning we expected a cruiser for our lump coal. There arrived a small squadron of destroyers who hooked themselves together around the Pamir. It was nicely manœuvred — a cable here and a fender there, and there they were, like good children, all fast, lashed forward and aft. The chief of the squadron boarded us and asked for Fourgues. He could n't have had his boots off for a long time nor washed either. His beard was full of cinders, his eyes red. When he found out that the Lamartine had taken the special coal and that there was nothing for him but the left-over, he made a row: —

"This is the third time! It fouls my gratings and

it smokes like hell! And they want us to make twenty-five knots with that dirt!"

But it seemed that he must get off at noon in order to go on patrol duty in the evening — I forget where — and so he had to take the coal. Those fellows on the destroyers, I pity them even more than the ones on the cruisers. They have n't room to stir hand or foot, and what a dog's life!

We had a hundred tons of coal left when our six little boats had finished. Fourgues would have liked very much to return empty, for it does n't look well to carry freight back. But there was no ship needing coal for five days, and as it was hardly worth while for the Pamir to go north with so little, the commander-in-chief ordered us by wireless (received by the chief of the squadron) to proceed to our destination.

"You see, my boy," said Fourgues, "the cruisers took the coal intended for the destroyers and the destroyers the coal for the cruisers. Such is life."

The destroyers gone, we crammed our ballast in forward, for you can see that our twenty-five hundred bales of cotton would sink us at the stern, and set out for Liverpool. It was a pleasant saunter. Fourgues had no fear of lacking coal with the hundred tons we were carrying gratis, and there were three of us for the watch, including the *bonhomme* of the Paris boats, who, by the way, has a little list of stories that beat Fourgues'.

At Liverpool the pilot delivered a telegram from the owner, who said that according to agreement with

the consignee, we must hand our cotton over to the Karl Kristian, a big Norwegian cargo boat, moored before Birkenhead. When we had been able to moor near by, can you guess what the captain said to Fourgues? I will give you a thousand chances! That the Karl Kristian was going to carry our twenty-five hundred bales with four thousand more to Copenhagen! Do you think that stuff is going to stay in Denmark? This was the first time Fourgues got into a rage since K—— and he said that if he had known, he would have pitched it all overboard in Morocco and carried furniture for a hundred thousand Boches, rather than to hand them on a platter material with which to furnish shells for an army corps. You must have read the articles of the Hague Conference, old man, on your battleship, so if you can tell why it is forbidden to sell coal to the Boches and why cotton is not contraband of war, you will please both Fourgues and me. If the Germans were in our place on the sea and we in theirs, I think an embargo on cotton would not have been so long delayed.

The Pamir did n't have time to get mouldy before Birkenhead. During the day the Karl Kristian scraped out our twenty-five hundred bales, and Fourgues profited by the occasion to have the constructor's diver — the Pamir was built there — examine our screw, which did not seem to be turning as it should. It was then that we learned that a good chunk of metal from the screw was lying in the Atlantic, as well as three nuts broken off from the nave.

Fourgues would have liked to have it repaired then and there, but the shop told him that they were overrun because the Admiralty was rushing construction, and so if the Pamir could go as far as Cardiff, we should find another screw at their branch establishment and some one to set it. As it is only a short promenade we left that evening in ballast, and this morning they stuck her nose down and installed a raft under the screw, just at water-level. To-morrow they will be through. We shall load with coal and get off again.

As there was nothing to do while this work was going on, Fourgues gave a holiday to the whole bunch, who did not need to be told twice, and invited me to dinner at the Welsh Lino! It cheered us up to drink fresh beer and eat fresh bread. As we were in such a good humor, I read him your letter from Malta which I had had in my pocket ever since Liverpool. I hope you don't mind, for he said: "They are lucky on the Auvergne. With a young chap like that on the bridge the commander ought to be able to sleep on both ears."

Believe me, it made him sit up to learn that you watch in a turret and that when you set foot on the bridge you have n't the right to speak! All that you wrote interested him greatly. Fourgues has a brusque manner, appears rather offish, and talks little except to swear; but when he really unbuttons, there is nothing to do but listen, for I have observed that sooner or later you find he has been in the right.

"Your friend's letter is not bad," he said when I had finished. "He is interested in what he is doing and there is n't anything but that, outside of home and family. But he seems to me to believe that the thing is being accomplished on the Auvergne. The environment encourages that. And he believes in nothing but the guns and dreams of nothing but wounds and bruises. Very good, but just the same, see if there is n't something beside cannon in this naval warfare! By the way things are going, I have a sort of an idea that the Germans don't understand it that way. As for the Austrians! Well, we shall see. Come on, kid, let's play pool and have a drink of whiskey. That will loosen up our fingers and legs. You can tell me what you think of the letter and see if we agree."

You know I play billiards like a fool, especially on those enormous English billiard-tables. Fourgues gave me a hundred points on five hundred and won in seven innings. I stood around and watched him do it and never saw him look so pleased. I tried to get in a few words about your letter, but he held the floor the entire time. I can't tell you everything from A to Z, for it lasted an hour, but he asked a lot of questions and as I could not answer them — "Ask your gunner," he would say, "this and that and the other" — chalking his cue.

And so, old man, I obey, and you may respond directly to Fourgues if you wish. I shan't be jealous and it will please him.

"One of two things," he said — "either the navy will fight the Austrians or it won't. If it's going to, why blockade the Strait of Otranto? If you want to shoot a rabbit, you let him come out of his hole first, then you get between the hole and the rabbit and then you fire! But you don't get in front of the hole in the first place or he won't come out. I don't know where the Austrians are, — at Pola or Cattaro or somewhere else, — but I know they're not going to come out with our navy promenading up and down in front of them, four to one. It would be better if we were to stay in some port near by, with only one or two ships in the Strait, — which is not so broad, — and let them make a sortie if they want to and then fall on them.

"The thing would be decided in an hour and the blockade would be over. Instead of that, we wear out our ships and our men while the Austrians remain at home, keeping up their machines and their marksmanship so as to be fresh and ready for the day when it comes.

"And what good does it do to go up and down the Adriatic all togged out? Everybody knows that nowadays warships can't get near an enemy coast because of the mines. The commander of the Lamartine told me the other day that they ought not to pass a hundred metres depth and that means from ten to twenty or thirty miles at sea. They certainly won't bombard the Austrian arsenals and invade Austria from that distance. All they'll get will be a floating

mine or a torpedo from a submarine. I can't see any other result. With the idea at bottom of fighting, they all seem to me to be doing their utmost not to get there. What's more, if you have read the English papers, you can see that it's the same over there. Well, who lives, learns. Write all that to your friend with a greeting from me and ask him what they think about it on the Auvergne and the other ships. Perhaps it is the idea of an old rough-and-ready who has n't been wearing out the books on tactics, but it ought not to be far from the truth."

Fourgues said a lot more, but I have had enough for to-day. To-morrow three thousand tons of coal and *en route* by night! If we have no new instructions we go back to coal the fleet. But perhaps a telegram will come during the day. Good-bye, old man. I'm going up to play the mandolin on the deck and you can be sure I shan't be thinking of you!

Alexandria, February 12

My dear Friend, —

I hope you will forgive me for not writing in so long, even at New Year. You know that I've thought of you, but honestly, I've not been having time to get mouldy! If I'm not mistaken my last letter was from Cardiff and we were expecting to leave for the Strait of Otranto. But the counter-order came. The English fleet needs a lot of coalers in the North Sea and has none of its own. At the beginning of the war they took for their motto "Business as

usual," and the *youms*[1] let the patrol-boats carry on the commerce in order not to disturb anything. But as the war kept dragging out, they could no longer guarantee supplies everywhere, so, in short, the Pamir was sent to Senegal, Togoland, and the Cameroon, where there is a French-English squadron which needed coal.

At first everything went well, but off Cape Finisterre we had a hard wind. The Pamir was loaded to the gunwales and you should have seen her! The decks were washed for thirty-six hours. The trouble was that the shaft was up to its old tricks, and we saw that the muff repaired at K—— was going to give us the slip right in the middle of the storm. Fourgues reduced speed as much as possible and not get into the trough of the sea and made for Cadiz to have the collars manufactured by Muriac put in place again. The repairs did n't go at all smoothly because my men could n't understand a word and myself hardly more. We profited by the occasion to lay in water and provisions. Really, it's not amusing to be a Frenchman in Spain at present. They looked sideways at us and laughed behind our backs. The Boches are well installed, the Government supports them, while Fourgues was rather badly received. And then all the French had been called home at the mobilization — there is no one left to represent us. All our affairs there are going to the dogs. The Boches profit by this. They are getting ready for the end of the

[1] The English.

war, seriously. And don't think for a minute that they all stay there! There are big vessels full of Germans sailing from Barcelona and Cadiz, which go to neutral countries and from there to Germany. We could make a big sweep if we went after them. I hope you'll tell me if any have been taken. You ought to know. As for me, I don't know much. I have my hands full on board and the papers say such stupid things, and then, once you have left land you think of other things. But you only have to walk along the docks there to see the boats sailing with the Boches. With some one to give information, France could know the hour and the day of sailing and a warship could gather them in as they left Spanish waters.

After that the Pamir went down to Dakar. Then we took in the whole coast, Gorée, Sierra Leone, Porto Novo, — leaving a little coal everywhere, sometimes on a gunboat, sometimes on a cruiser or at a dock. It reminded me of the old trading voyages when they made little trips from port to port to unload three tons and take on a hundred hogsheads. Only, this time, nothing doing with merchandise! There were bales and bananas and ivory everywhere, more than I can tell, waiting to be shipped. Fourgues is devoured with despair to see all that moulding when the Pamir has room enough to clean up the entire coast. But he asked in vain. He was refused everywhere because he was in the Government service, so we returned empty. With the ba-

nanas alone we could have paid for our return voyage. All that stuff was going to a neutral port and from there I know very well where!

We saw a lot of people down there who asked for news and details. Fourgues' preserves and *marc* were all used up because he invited so many of the poor devils who were homesick. There are some who have had three or four years in Africa and it was their turn to come home. Now they are obliged to stay on. It seems that things are going well and that Togoland and the Cameroon will not take long. But the Boches prepared their stroke with a long hand, for away off down in the bush, cannon and machine-guns of the latest model were found and heaps of ammunition. In spite of this, everybody said that the country would soon be cleared, which will make two fine colonies the less for them. The English got a number of their boats, and the naval officers with whom we talked said that that would make a fine lump of prize-money. When we told them that with us since the war, prize-money has been suppressed, and gratuities and the rest, they would n't believe us. As they said, the laborer is worthy of his hire, and one is more apt to hustle if there is some sort of recompense ahead. There was even one who said that we were idiots and that we should be obliged to go back to it. Fourgues wanted to get after him, but it was only half-hearted, for he had already told me that he thought the same.

On going back to Dakar we were ordered to touch

at Casablanca to await instructions. We thought it was going to be like last August, but not at all! There were two thousand tons of cereals waiting to be taken to Montenegro. We loaded it from *barcasses*, like the furniture of the Boches, only we stowed it better! In the middle of December there is something like a swell. I kept saying, "*Ça y est!* That *barcasse* is going over in the surf!" — and then it did n't after all. They know how to turn the trick, those Arabs. Fourgues was pleased to have a load and not to be returning in ballast. He was afraid, though, that they would n't send us to Montenegro after all.

"You'll see, my boy. They'll make us unload all that and go back for coal."

He does n't like coal because, he says, although it keeps the teeth white and is good for the stomach, it is impossible to have clean shirts and handkerchiefs. But we were sent to Oran to complete our load with shoes, blankets, and all sorts of material for clothing. They must be awfully up against it in Montenegro.

Finally the Pamir spent several hours at Bizerta, getting gasoline for the Montenegrin army. Even though we did n't mould in any of the ports, all this took time, and in the worst season too. I should never have believed that the Mediterranean was so bad. It is worse than the Atlantic and the China Sea: rain or wind, wind or rain, and a choppy sea all the time. Fourgues takes it and laughs at me: —

"Eh, my boy! You see it's a mistake to run down

the Midi! The Mediterranean is only a cup, but it takes clever folks to go up and down it without getting into something nasty. Now look at that — and that!"

I can understand waves as high as the smoke-stack where they have space in which to pile up, but to find such in the Mediterranean is too much for me. You, old man, have some peace in your turret, but the bridge of the Pamir is seldom dry.

Our rendezvous was for ten miles west of Fano and the Pamir arrived about noon. From far off we asked ourselves what was going to happen. We expected to see a destroyer or perhaps a cruiser, but not fifty or sixty of you! We could see smoke for thirty miles, and all the time other boats kept coming along. It was the first time I had seen the fleet out in full force, battleships, cruisers, and torpedo-boats. It is a fine sight! I looked for the Auvergne, but she was n't there. What were you doing? I was so interested watching the wigwagging, the flags, and all the little boats going from one ship to another, that I forgot to write you a word during the half-hour we stopped in the middle of the lot. I was asking myself what you were all doing there, quiet and idle, and it was only at the end that I saw the mail-boat which had been hidden by a big cruiser, and understood why there were so many small craft running about. Well, your admiral is n't afraid, is he, to stay there all together, under the noses of the Greeks!

As soon as we had stopped, a steam launch came

for Fourgues and took him aboard the admiral's ship, where he did n't stay fifteen minutes. When he came back, he climbed the ladder in a hurry.

"Get under way at once, my boy, — head north. Put yourself behind that destroyer while I read my orders."

He went to open his sealed envelope and I proceeded behind the destroyer all by myself, proud as could be in the midst of all that steel. Nevertheless, it was annoying not to have known that we should run upon the mail-boat. You can get along, but at home they will think I have been drowned, for they have been a month without a letter.

When Fourgues returned to the bridge I expected him to tell me about it, and I began: —

"Well, Captain?"

"Keep straight ahead, my boy."

He stood near the taximeter, frowning and tapping on the rail. I could see that he was disturbed, but there was no use mixing in. I should only have caught it, whereas, as he has no one but me to talk to, it was all sure to come out before a great while.

He went down again and gave orders for doubling the watch — two men forward, one aft. Then he said that as we were going up and down the Adriatic again he and I should keep watch *en chef* with the others to support us except during meals, which we should continue to eat together, but in the navigation-room. Afterwards he ruminated without another syllable until dinner.

I did n't say a word, but I was beginning to be stunned by this reserve just at the moment when he was surely going to do something interesting. He is more apt to be headlong. Finally he exploded: —

"Well, anyway, we must consult. Say, kid, do you know what they asked me on that battleship?"

No danger of my opening my mouth!

"Well, they asked me why I did n't have wireless, and why I did n't have a lookout on the masthead, and where was my row of signal lights, and how was I going to communicate with them at night and with the destroyers, and why this and why that! Good God, they have only to give the order! I should ask nothing better than to have the Pamir rigged with all the apparatus in creation and with new boilers and a whole shaft into the bargain! But think of it! To act as though they had caught me napping! I'm not a battleship! Well, then I turned in and asked one of them who was still putting it up to me — a little fellow off a frigate —

"'And you? What are you doing stock-still here? Are you waiting for a torpedo?'

"He began to laugh and called some others and they looked me over as though I were a strange animal. There was one who condescended to explain that submarines were for coast-defence and would never in the world descend as far as Fano; that it was n't necessary to imagine horrors — one could sail quite safely. Farther up, perhaps, it would be as well to keep one's eyes open, but on the sea —

it was a joke! But it was a little too strong, just the same, for them to think that I was afraid! I don't know what I said, but the admiral came: —

"'Oh here is the commander of the Pamir, who is going to Montenegro! You are luckier than I! But surely you are n't afraid!'

"I was going to answer, but he went away before I had time, and as soon as they had given me my sealed orders I came right back. Here I know what I am doing and no one tries to give me lessons! Let them grant me the wireless! I have asked the owner for it ten times and every time he looks at me as though I were asking for the moon! Oh, yes, — I forgot. On the gangway there was a little naval lieutenant. I asked him what I was to do if I saw a submarine — should I go after it with my fists? He too looked at me as though I were a freak and shrugged his shoulders and went back to laugh with the rest of them. Can't you just see it?"

It did Fourgues good to relieve his mind. He lit his pipe and swallowed a glass of good rum from the Antilles.

"Go to bed, kid, and try till midnight to get some sleep, for to-morrow you can't count on any. We are going to Antivari, to arrive at night and set out again the next morning and all the stuff has to be unloaded. Fortunately the nights are long. They 'll see if old man Fourgues has turnip juice in his veins!"

It is not exactly gay going up the coast of Albania.

There is about as much vegetation as on my hand, and when the wind begins to swoop down from the heights, it's no laughing matter. We caught one of those hard winds that are enough to pull the masts up by the roots. I don't know what the destroyer did to keep from capsizing. Every time we could see her between waves she was over on one side or the other. As for the Pamir, she has had so much of that sort of thing that it does n't even take off any paint — because she has n't any left!

By hugging the coast we arrived at Antivari the next day, the destroyer ahead showing the route. The wind fell, but still it was n't exactly fine and there was not so much as a candle for light. Fourgues went in as though it were broad day, but really we could see neither the coast nor the wharf. You would have believed he was going into the basin of the Eure at Havre with a tug in front and another behind.

All the same, there was a crowd on the dock, Montenegrins who caught our ropes and were not too stupid about winding them. The Pamir was able to turn and did n't smash anything in coming alongside. The natives leaped on board like devils. They must have asked for something to eat in their lingo, for as we got out the first bags of corn they fell on them and filled their pockets.

As night work, I recommend that! Not allowed to light a torch, not allowed to use the winch, not allowed to shout! Just pitch everything over onto the dock without knowing where it will fall — so

much the worse for any one who is underneath! Those who were on land grabbed the stuff as well as they could and dragged it into the sheds — gasoline, shoes, blankets, sacks of corn. We did n't kill any one, though I don't see why not, nor did the Austrian aviators who came at two o'clock in the morning and dropped four or five bombs which burst all around — excepting one which fell into our corn without going off and which Fourgues threw overboard as though it were a cigarette stump. As soon as they heard the airplanes, all the natives ran like rabbits, and there was no way of getting them to come back. Behold those who love their food all served! The destroyer sent us some men, and although they must have longed for sleep after the dog's life of these last few days, nevertheless, they dragged the things out as though it were for themselves. That's what one might call pulling chestnuts out of the fire! At five in the morning the hold was empty and scraped and the Pamir left without waiting for anything more. The destroyer, having received a radio during the night, was to remain, so she put out to wander around the neighborhood, and we went down the Adriatic without being convoyed. If a hydroplane with a carbine had fired on us, we should simply have been prisoners, and would n't that have looked nice! Fourgues grumbled, saying that a ship of three thousand tons is worth taking and that France is not rich enough to let them go in enemy waters like that.

But we had no orders, so Fourgues was wondering whether to return to Cardiff or go to Toulon, or what. In short, life on the bridge was far from amusing. As a climax, a crank got hot. We had to slow down to three knots and turn the hose on it. There was time for us to be sunk ten times over, for it took fifty hours to get back, with bad weather and head winds.

Fourgues wanted to go inside at Corfu for quiet water and to anchor if the crank would n't cool off; but just as we were turning into the north channel, a whole squadron of torpedo-boats came along and signalled for us to go outside. They shouted through the megaphone that French boats should not go into Greek waters. But the Pamir is not a war-vessel. . . .

They talked on. It seems that the whole navy believed the Pamir had been sunk or torpedoed and that they had been searching for us everywhere for twenty-four hours. The destroyer which was with us at Antivari had received orders to come back and try to find us, while the others went up *en rideau.* The destroyer started out at full speed and passed us without seeing us, of course, because we were hugging the coast for shelter. They got a first-rate calling down by wireless from the commander-in-chief, but Fourgues was annoyed, a little, to learn of it.

"Too bad! And if they had given us a wireless it would n't have happened," he concluded.

They were also looking for us because they wanted us to go to Alexandria, where we arrived day before

yesterday. We don't yet know why, but I believe it is because of an expedition near Constantinople. Fourgues is well pleased, for, he says, it will be amusing to anchor as a conqueror where he has anchored so many times with a lot of junk. I only hope it may be so! He spends his time now telling me about the Bosphorus and the straits of the Black Sea which I have never passed.

He says that with nerve the thing is possible — that we should take them by surprise and go right in, and then in three days the Turks would be done for. "Only," he adds, "it is n't enough to say you are going; you have to go!"

We rest while waiting. The English are very nice and they don't worry at Alexandria. The crew are improving the opportunity! There are a few roughnecks among them, but Fourgues shuts his eyes because they have worked like dogs for three months and this is the first time there has been any relaxation.

I sat down to get my letters ready for the mail-boat, as you see. I wish I had some books. Since the month of August I have been thinking a great deal, especially as Fourgues has made me see what a lot of things there are that I don't know. Before, I never read anything but the papers, but now I need something more serious, if only to make conversation with him. Send me a list of books, old man, on nautical subjects and the history of Europe and some classics too. I will buy them in France. If you are n't

cross at my having abandoned you for so long, ship me a package of books that you are through with and don't need any more. Wishing you a happy New Year.

PART TWO

Newcastle, England
April 8, 1915

WELL, old man, we have just been through something special in the way of bad weather, up north of Scotland. You must wonder what we were doing up there, as I wrote from Egypt that the Pamir was going to transport men to the Dardanelles. As you shall see, it's quite simple.

We remained at Alexandria just long enough to like it and to get a few little habits — movies, bars, etc. Fourgues and I went to Cairo together and to the Pyramids. You have no idea how he can talk about all that. I don't know where he was ever able to learn so much, and no hot air, you know, for I bought a guide-book afterwards to see if it was all true, — the Pharaohs, the Turks, Bonaparte, and all that, — and he had told it all just like the book. In this connection I want to thank you for the books you sent me. You are a real brother. I received them here day before yesterday and I have begun with the maritime history of France. It is very interesting. I am not ashamed to confess to you that I don't know much about it. But after what I have now read, it seems to me to be always the same story — frigates or battleships, sails or steam, you could say

it was beginning all over again. Some day I will tell you at length what I think about it.

At Alexandria our crew spent all their savings in four days and made a good deal of music in the streets and bars. The police brought several back, but Fourgues would n't be hard on them.

"Leave them alone, my boy. Sailors are n't archangels. Let the cops come aboard the Pamir for three months and see if they drink seltzer water after even that little while. When our lascars have n't a cent left, they'll be quiet and we'll give them some hard work."

That's the way with Fourgues. At sea he makes them stand around, with blows if things don't move fast enough. But when there is nothing to do, he gives them a royal peace. I believe it's the best way, for all the reservists work hard, and there is n't one who wants to leave the Pamir, where, by the way, we never have a drop.

After eight days in Alexandria we were ordered to Port Said. It was on account of a cargo boat from Bombay, loaded with Indian soldiers for the front. It was having trouble with its condensers, and as the men must go and as the boat was in for a fortnight of repairs, they took the old Pamir, being free, to trundle the six hundred men. As far as comfort goes, it was pretty poor. When it comes to freight, the Pamir is n't afraid of three thousand tons and even a little more crammed into the corners. But passengers! There is only the deck and the hold, so get out

of it if you can with that! Fourgues put two higher officers in each of the cabins of Blangy and Muriac and I don't see how the four managed to exist. You know the cabins of the Pamir — as bureau-drawers they could n't be better! The other officers, the "subs" as the *youms* call them, we installed, along with the non-commissioned officers, with the help of the boards which served for the Boches last year. As for the rest, they were free to stuff themselves in anywhere, hold or deck, according to preference.

Fourgues and I had n't time to arrange anything for the poor devils. We were given only twenty-four hours' notice and had to coal and provision. Think of it! To take six hundred men and feed thirty-five of them and not to know whether it is to be for ten or for twenty days, because no one could tell us whether they were going to Marseilles, to Havre, or to England! The authorities on land at Port Said told Fourgues that he would receive orders at sea by wireless. When he answered that he had no wireless, there was the usual ceremony and they handed it to each other. Finally, they told him to touch at Marseilles for instructions and that there they would tell him what to do. Fourgues profited by the incident to telegraph the owner and demand that we be fitted with wireless in a hurry because he had had enough of being raked over the coals as though it were his fault. But all that is by the way.

We took from on board the Indian cargo boat the entire provision of rice for six hundred men, as well

as the officers' provision of whiskey. The officers had with them cases of port wine and divers alcohols. It was lucky for them, for you know except for the old *marc* and rum, in small quantities, Fourgues does n't like to have us drink. They had to have the *fafa* to make their cocktails and serve them specially during the entire voyage.

The night we stayed in Port Said, Fourgues and I went to buy certain eatables, preserves, jams, etc., with which to feed all those officers. The things were not easy to find, and whew — the prices! What enraged Fourgues the most was that we had to pay for everything in gold, but no one ever gave us anything but silver. As the same thing had happened in Alexandria, at Cairo, and everywhere we have been since the beginning of the war, he claims that it is another stroke of the Boches.

"You see, my boy, we pay in gold, but we have no way of getting any ourselves. Don't worry! It is n't lost for everybody! They have their agents all around! Our good money goes by way of Greece or Italy and with it they pay the neutrals for their victuals!"

Fourgues added some other things, but it is better not to tell you because you will imagine that I am growing too cranky and you know that I don't like cranks. The Pamir went to Marseilles first. We had fairly good weather, but as we were so light, we rolled and pitched a little, not much, — just like a comfortable father of a family, — but it was enough

to lay five hundred out of the six hundred Hindus on their backs. Almost all the rice is left, for they could n't eat a thing. It was better thus, for I don't know what our cook would have done with six hundred of them to feed. He had no time to waste as it was, though it is easy to take care of Hindus — all you need is some rice and water. About ten of them had brought flutes or drums, and they did not once stop playing from Port Said to Havre. They played in relays, two at a time, installing themselves just at the foot of the bridge so that those in the hold who were seasick could hear, and all the time, night and day, they beat the drum and played the flute. You have no idea what that Oriental music can be. At first it seemed as though they played the same notes all the time and then — not at all! It comes and goes like a thought! When I had the watch at night sometimes I longed to sleep, listening to them, and then sometimes I wanted to cry. There were times when I wanted to tell them to be still because it was too stupid to feel your heart swell so. And then it would seem as though I must have it and I listened after all. I tell you my foolishness, poor old fellow.

At Marseilles we simply went in and out again. An officer of the English Mission came to tell us to go to Havre with our Hindus, but the superior officers, who had had enough of it in the bureau-drawers of Muriac and Blangy and who had finished their port and their whiskey the day before, asked to leave at once. As they were lords, or at least something

'way-up, they could go without waiting and the "subs" took their places.

The Pamir went all around Spain and the Atlantic coast with the six hundred Hindus, who were dreadfully sick and arrived at Havre like rags. Fourgues said that it was just a little barbarous, the more so as nothing is really saved by the trip, for it will take a month at least before all those unbleached boys will be able to go to the front.

They were exhausted. Some of them almost died, they were spitting blood. And as they were cold, bronchitis and inflammation of the lungs had set in. The only physician they had was Fourgues, which means none at all. As a remedy he gave them rum in hot water, for our medicine chest had soon been emptied. Three of them died, which is not many, say the officers.

We threw them overboard into the Atlantic with a sack of coal at their feet to make them sink. That hurt us French. But the others — oh, *là là!* It's plain to be seen that in India human life does n't count for much.

We were all glad to leave them at Havre. I wonder what they can do at the front. If it came to being killed, I don't believe they would hesitate, and when you have seen them shivering and crowding together under the melting snow of late February, it seems probable that they would die like flies in the trenches. And we were a little afraid they might leave some cholera in the Pamir, which Fourgues did n't like

very well, having seen a real epidemic in China. So he was glad when they sent us to Sunderland for coal, because he pretends that coal, although dirty, is the best antiseptic known for most diseases.

At Sunderland we loaded a good three thousand tons in a short time. What is it going to cost France, all these thousands of tons of coal which must be bought abroad? It won't be a small price! I know that the Boches have swept away our northern mines, but there are other mines in France. Evidently they are not sufficient; but if we exploited them and economized a fourth of our purchases, at least that much would not be going out and our exchange would not rise as it is doing. It is vexatious for a country as rich as ours to spend all that good French money and to see how they give you the change with five or ten per cent discount. It will be nice if that goes on! I asked Fourgues why the coal was left in the earth when it would be so much better in the hold or the fireplace. He replied that this was because of a law of public welfare under the Revolution, made to prohibit illicit gain, and that the same law of public welfare did not permit us even now to take our underground riches. "It's just as it was at H——," he added; "the substratum belongs to the Revolution! It would seem that it's better to be ruined than to touch it!"

But the coal we got at Sunderland was not for the French after all, for they sent us to the English grand fleet. The *youms* were getting expeditions

ready for Africa, Mesopotamia, and the Dardanelles; they had no boats free, and as Jellicoe's fleet was crying for coal, we were sent in a hurry. I don't tell you where the Pamir went to find the grand fleet because an arch-edict forbids. Even the English journals have n't the right to mention it, and, anyway, you may be sure my letter would be censored. They don't want the Germans to know where the English ships are.

The Pamir made the trip up there from Sunderland twice, and, I can tell you, there are a lot of them — battleships and cruisers and all the rest! What are all I saw at Fano beside this? Nothing, my poor friend! If the *youms* have n't yet let loose for war on land, I beg you to believe that they have a few ships, and beauties!

Only, they don't tire them. The squadrons rest quietly at anchor and from time to time they go out and look for the Boches, or if the Boches come out, they pounce on them. In this way the engines and personnel are not in rags like the French fleet. And what did the English officers do — being awfully bored, by the way — but invite Fourgues and me over during the coaling and question us because we had been at the other end of the war! Honestly, they thought we were kidding them when we told them that the whole lot of you, but especially the cruisers and destroyers, were kept dashing up and down at sea with your tails curled up, for forty and fifty days at a time, trying to stop up the Adriatic. They asked

us if it was also the custom in the French army, when a regiment was not fighting, to have it march back and forth behind the lines for five and six weeks at a time — and then a lot of other questions by which we could see that they did n't understand it at all.

That 's not to say that the grand fleet does nothing. The cruisers and destroyers guard the coast of England and patrol as far as Norway. The Government takes pity on them, too, for the storms they have to face and the state in which they return, and *dame!* they are given a rest — sent to port with leave for everybody! And you know it 's very different, drudging near your native land, feeling that you are protected and that when duty is over, you may go and pass a day or two with your family.

They are all jolly, except that they are annoyed at not having been able to have a big set-to with the Germans. Apart from that, they feel that the English fleet has done its duty, and they cannot understand why you are kept on the go as we described to them. This is not to run you down, old man, now that you are in the navy and, as Fourgues says, infected with its spirit, but the English sailors are rather fresher than yours. And you should see the difference in age! When you go with your coal from one English ship to another and chat with this one and that, you think you are talking with one of the fellows when it may be an admiral! On the French cruisers the commander always has white hair and a white beard; it tires him to climb a ladder, and he

is afraid of saying too much. Fourgues claims that the big chiefs are even worse, but I have never seen them. At any rate, for the destroyers here they give them quite young men, from twenty-five to thirty years old, while down there all I saw were well over forty with pepper-and-salt hair. It's like that from the top down, ten or fifteen years' difference. The enthusiasm is in proportion. I don't know how I shall be at forty, but certainly with rheumatism and a nice touch of liver complaint I should find it pretty tough to be set on a destroyer where one is drenched from the first of January until the thirty-first of December, and to command no more than sixty men. Whereas, if I could have that now, just see if I would n't be pleased and laugh at being wet to the bones, because I should know that when I got to be forty or fifty, if I had served well, I should command a squadron with thousands of men and a lot of ships! . . . Maybe I'm wrong and the English too, but I wish you would explain to me why it is n't the same with us as with them.

I told you that the Pamir made two voyages between Sunderland and the grand fleet. On the second they sent us away off to the ends of the earth, up north in the midst of the islands where there was dirty weather, and where the Pamir coaled the flotillas of destroyers and scouts. These are on the go all the time — with leave in England, you may be sure — near German waters, and they say that the Boches will never come out for a real big battle, but that it

is n't worth while trying to get them out of their holes because their coast waters are full of mines and submarines and the game would n't be worth the candle. The English would be blown up before getting anywhere near. Although this is not what the English and French papers say, I think we can believe those who have been there. "If there is a serious battle," they say, "it will be a big surprise; but that's not to say that we don't want one." The Boches, it seems, are informed from England itself, where a lot of their countrymen are at large, and as soon as an English ship puts to sea, Berlin is warned. Whereas when the Germans come to bombard the English coasts, no one knows about it until the shells begin to fall.

They also say that the Allies are a little too good about respecting neutral territorial waters and that the Germans don't hesitate to borrow Danish or Dutch waters for a run from Kiel over to Ostend or Bruges. This reminds me of what I saw off the coast of Italy the first time we coaled the French fleet. While our cruisers and destroyers were stopping ships at sea, the Pamir ran across lots of boats close to the Italian coast, going up to Trieste or in that direction, and they were well loaded, believe me.

If that's the way we are blockading the Boches, they won't need to cry "Kamerad!" very soon! I wish you would tell me how many cargoes of contraband the navy has seized. I ask you a lot of questions, but that's because you wrote in your last

letter that it interested you, too, to know what goes on outside of your Auvergne.

As you added that my mind was improving with the war, I also address myself to my sometime ensign, if you please, in order to form my little judgment! You know I tell you everything that comes into my head, just as I used to do when you said that I talked like a coach. Anyway, it's something if I taught you to listen! Good Lord, how stupid I must have been, only two years ago! Fourgues, too, claims that I improve.

Just the same the old rascal played me a dirty trick. When we got back to Newcastle he nailed me to the ship and ran up to London for a change of air. I must tell you that on returning from Scotland we had one of those little spring hurricanes which put two boilers out of business and loosened the muffs of our broken shaft, which we have trundled about ever since August. Then, as the Pamir has n't been unharnessed since Alexandria, Fourgues said he would n't go another step till they put the ship in the dock, examined her hull, retubed the boilers, and changed the shaft. The *youms* wanted to send him up there again with three thousand tons of coal for the fleet, but Fourgues answered that an old fox like him knew when a boat was done for, and that he did n't intend that the Pamir should be put entirely out of business like an idiot, when he was the one to catch it and not the rest of them.

In order to have it his own way in peace, he took

the train that very evening. While he was packing his valise he called me into his cabin: —

"Look, my boy, here is a paper. I leave you as commander of the Pamir and the whole outfit. Have her put into the dock and repaired. I shall see if you can manage. They made me do the same thing once in Melbourne on my boat when I knew less than you. When the hull is repainted, the boilers retubed, and the shaft replaced, telegraph me at the Charing Cross Hotel, London. I give you ten days. Put it through!"

"But, captain, to whom shall I address myself?"

"You are the commander and you have a tongue. As for me, I'm going up to London to raise hell in order to get the wireless, and if the owner won't put it in, I'll go to Paris. But I don't want to hear a word from the Pamir until you wire me 'Cleared!' Do you understand?"

"Certainly, captain, but —"

"*Tara-tutu!* Here are the keys, the papers, the checks, and everything. If you are cleared in ten days I shall arrange to have you made a captain for a long voyage, because then they can give you a bark all to yourself. So long, my boy, *barca!*"

He shook hands and was gone. So for four days, old man, I have been doing things. It is just as though you had been put in command of the Auvergne and being the master is very different from receiving orders. There are a lot of snags and you have to take the initiative instead of merely listening and executing. Before, I used to think that Fourgues

had rather a heavy hand, but now I think that to make things go you have to have an eye on everything and not spare your men. Most of the time I am in overalls rummaging around the boilers and in the tunnel of the screw. Things are coming on. The Pamir has been scraped and will get her second coat of paint to-day. One boiler and half of another have been retubed. Fourgues calculated the business very well. It can be done in ten days by not losing an hour. We are hard at it. The crew is all right. You know what it is to get a boat into your blood; and then, when you see that you are of some use, — ah, old pal, if we are cleared in ten days, the king won't be my cousin!

Malta, June 17, 1915

My dear Friend, —

I believe the Pamir is engaged for good this time in the Oriental affair. We have been here for a month and a half and it does n't look as though it were going to be over right away. I ask nothing better, because at present this is the only place where interesting things are happening. Fourgues is also pleased. We get about, we transport stuff. We are not the important ones, but at any rate the merchant marine is doing all it can and the old Pamir wastes no time.

She runs all by herself now, since the shaft and tubes were changed — which is to say that she is entirely refitted. At Newcastle I did n't clear in ten

days after all, but in eleven. But as we were well advanced the tenth day, I wired Fourgues "Cleared!" and then shook in my shoes for fear he would get there before it was all done. I made them work night and day the last twenty-four hours, but the crew never flinched. In short, when Fourgues arrived they were letting the water into the dock and an hour afterwards the Pamir was alongside the wharf. He saw very well that I had n't quite put it through, but said never a word, for his little trip had put him in a good humor.

"Very good, my boy. I will send a report to the owner and say that he can give you a boat when one is free" — which won't be in a hurry, you may be sure.

This rather went to my head, though. Just think if I would n't like to command a tub during the war! Then Fourgues explained. He had had time to go to Paris and had brought back a lot of information. It seems that in France all construction is suspended because the war will be over before the end of the year and we should think of nothing but war-work and munitions. As all the merchant ships are being used at the present moment, I shan't soon get a command. Fourgues also saw the owner and had rather a hot encounter because he would not pay for the wireless, saying that the Pamir had got along like this for nearly ten months and that it was not worth while undertaking the expense, for whereas wireless was good for the illustrated papers that tell grand

stories about it, at bottom it was n't much use. There was nothing to be done with the owner, so Fourgues went to the Navy Department where they said much the same thing. It seems that we are quite safe on the sea, that we are in control, that the German submarines are a bluff, and that, anyway, the Germans have n't any. Fourgues is not of this opinion, not exactly. He says that the Germans are n't so stupid as to leave us in peace on the sea and that they are preparing another stroke equal to the last. But all the official gentlemen would n't hear of this, so there was nothing to be done — the Pamir went out as before. The owner did n't have to add a thing, not even a cask on the masthead for a lookout. But Fourgues had one installed under the pretext that fifty francs more or less would ruin neither the owner nor the stockholders. They don't lose time, those gentlemen! The Pamir, which is nearly twenty years old, has paid almost a thousand francs a day in rent, without counting the coal, damages, insurance, freight, and everything. The stockholders have only to open their pockets — it tumbles in! At that rate, in a year they will have enough to pay for two or three other Pamirs, but not enough, of course, for them to spare a few thousand francs for the wireless!

But I'm forgetting another story. You will remember that we struck the cruiser Lamartine on the occasion of our first coaling at sea and that we smashed her bows and one of our lifeboats. It was n't Fourgues' fault, you remember, and he said that it

must all be repaired at Newcastle. But the owner refused outright to pay anything, saying that that sort of damages were not included in the agreement. The navy also refused, under the pretext that it is not responsible henceforth for a ship on which the captain is not in the Government service. They demanded a report from Fourgues and will also ask the Lamartine for one. All that will make a lot of papers and complications without end. Just the same, we sail with two new lifeboats, for which Fourgues preferred to pay out of his own pocket rather than do without.

At Newcastle the Pamir took on field-guns for the English expeditionary force in the Dardanelles and shells for the big guns of their battleships. They are of a different calibre. We put the guns in the forward hold and the shells aft. As we had a good deal of room left aft, because the twelve-inch shells, though heavy, take little space, they told us to go by way of Gibraltar to fetch the supplies and baggage of a company of soldiers bound for Gallipoli who were to leave at the same time as we, but on another boat. All this was a little complicated, but we have seen plenty of complications since the war began. Moreover, the English are n't fussy. The officers in charge of the loading come around for five minutes every day, take a look and go away.

This is the first time that the Pamir has carried shells, — real ones, charged with cordite, — and you can imagine how afraid we were that one of them

would fall into the bottom of the hold and blow everything up! Fourgues seized the opportunity to have all the cables of the winches and the iron-work of the derricks changed, saying that they were a little old and that he could not guarantee their solidity. The English made no bother at all about it, but handed us over a fine cable, brand-new, of excellent steel. We even had two or three hundred yards left! And I tell you, the Pamir sailed completely done over!

It took ten days to get to Gibraltar, which is rather long, but as we ran into a lot of fog, with that kind of a cargo Fourgues was not anxious to get into a collision so he diminished speed. Think of it! We had the munitions of two big English battleships, and if the Pamir went down, they would have had to wait at least two months before they could send the Turks a single shell! Fourgues knows how to navigate. When we have a cargo it's all the same to him whether he kicks up a lot of spray or whether he crawls, but either way he makes continual rounds in the holds to see if the stowage is solid and that no cases of cartridges are broken or shells lying around loose.

The English stowed it all very well, however, with good oak and new pine. There was no danger of it shifting. The Pamir is rich! We shall have all that timber, and Fourgues hopes they will give him more munitions to transport, now that he is arranged for it, because that seems more like real war-work.

At Gibraltar the company of soldiers for which the Pamir was to carry supplies waited for us until evening. But as we were held back by the fog and as the company was wanted in the Orient in a hurry, they went, piling their stuff on the deck of their boat. But the English did n't wish to waste the hundred tons we had at their disposal, so they dumped in a great lot of preserves and jam and chocolate which was waiting on the dock. They feed the English soldiers well, and the war must be costing England a pretty penny. We bought tobacco at Gibraltar and cards and Spanish wine. The latter is cheap and of a good quality. But the place is very monotonous and tiresome. It may be because of the war. There's nothing nice there except the landscape with the rocks. Otherwise all you can say of it is that it's a colony!

The Pamir went direct to Mudros, where they told us to report and receive orders as to destination. In the Mediterranean the weather was not so very bad, but all the same, Fourgues is right — one never knows what's going to happen in the way of weather; the wind changes without one's knowing why and the sea rises in an hour. The Pamir tossed a good deal, all the more as Fourgues would n't go fast because of the explosives in the hold. But it was n't worth the trouble carrying those shells, because when we reached Mudros they told us that of the two ships which were to take them, one had been sunk by a submarine the week before at the Dardanelles, and the other, not being able to get through, had returned

to Malta to be repaired. Was n't it stupid to have known nothing at all about it because of not having any wireless! We looked as though we had tumbled down from the moon with our shells for the —— and the ——, and everybody was laughing at us.

If we had been informed, Fourgues would have put in at Malta to learn what to do with the ammunition, as it was of a special kind and could n't be used by the other English ships that were there. Well, so we kept the ammunition and left the jam and preserves! There was no difficulty about them — everybody wanted them; they were unloaded in a flash. As for the field-guns, no one was willing to take them off because it seems that they belonged at the front and the bill of lading was not sufficiently clear. We lost two days waiting for orders from Egypt, from English headquarters. Finally they told us to go to Alexandria where the guns would be assigned to a brigade that was forming. During this time the troops at Gallipoli were crying with all their might and main for guns and we had only to carry them over — we were so very near! But our order was imperative and we went to Alexandria. When we got there they said that the English brigade had already started and that we must catch up with it immediately at Gallipoli, without which it would have ammunition and no guns. We set out again at once and arrived on that part of the coast where the troops they call the Anzacs are stationed. They unloaded the guns as they could. Since its arrival the brigade

has been bombarded a good deal without being able to respond, having no artillery, and they got after us a little about it, but we could n't help it. We stayed there five days, as the lighters were few and the coast pretty difficult. The Turks fired some big shells at the Pamir — they fell all around but never touched her. Fourgues was as happy as a god. He stood, leaning against the rail with his field-glass, watching the shots: —

"*Tiens*, my boy, that one's too short! That's too long! They'll never get the old Pamir!"

At one side there was the steamer Terre-de-Feu, which was carrying fodder and near which we stayed for two days. Old man Plantat, a friend of Fourgues, commands her and came on board the Pamir for a meal. Plantat has been up and down the Ægean Sea ever since the beginning of the Dardanelles campaign and he gave us a lot of tips. I believe you know him; he said he remembered you. He is just the same devil-may-care sort as ever. He said that the whole business in the Orient is a failure, and that we shall never get to Constantinople because we did n't do what we should have done at the very beginning, and now it's too late; the Turks won't let themselves be taken unawares and are sending out mines and submarines all the time.

He also said that at the beginning, when the Bouvet and other boats were lost, there was nothing to do but push right on without looking back and that Constantinople would have been reduced by our

guns, except for a lot of diplomatic delays beforehand and a lot of indecision at the time; but that now there is no use exciting ourselves about it any more. We shall only lose men and ships and money and be obliged to give up in the end without having done anything.

I repeat this as Plantat said it. But I omit his arguments, which you must understand better than I, on the Auvergne, where you get all the wireless news. This is the first time that Fourgues and I have heard anything serious about Oriental matters, for we have only the papers and the statements of official persons who say that Constantinople will be taken to-morrow. Ever since I began the maritime history you sent me, I have been saying to myself, as I read the accounts of the admirals and ambassadors of the old time, "What a lot of bluffers!" But I forget that no one perceives this until one or two hundred years afterwards on going through the archives, and that at the time they seemed quite wonderful. Now, as I ponder and listen to men like Fourgues and Plantat, who are not easily fooled, I see clearly that in this war it is the same old ceremony. The more newspapers there are, the less one knows of the truth. Of course, it's not the Pamir that will win the war, but I'll be hanged if we ever know why or for what reason they send us here, there, and then away again!

When we are in one place, the authorities say that evidently things are a little mixed up around there,

but that it's all going to straighten out soon, and that, anyway, everything is going well everywhere else. We are reassured. And then the Pamir arrives somewhere else — and she gets about a good deal, as you can testify — and we hear the same anthem. What does it mean? They are a lot of liars and the *poilus* and the sailors are the ones who suffer!

And who can think that everything is going for the best in the face of a job like ours after Gallipoli? I wrote you on another page of how that brigade without guns was bombarded for two days. The coast is as hard as marble, the Turkish guns are on the heights, and there is no way of sheltering yourself from them. When they had corrected their range and things began to fall too close, there was nothing to do but move away if you could, for those mortars can't be stopped with your hand. So there were not a few wounded, without counting those who had caught the fever or colic during the forty-eight hours and were half dead. And not a hospital-ship in the road!

As the Pamir was starting for Malta to carry those shells to the battleship that was being repaired there, they sent a hundred broken arms and legs and as many sick along with us. Fortunately, we had the planks left from the Morocco Boches and from the stowage of the field-artillery. We were able to manufacture a series of frames on the deck and in the forward hold. It was splendid the way the crew worked.

Engine-room men, stokers, deckhands — everybody — nailed, screwed, and hammered for four days. You could do anything with boys like that! Fourgues could grumble and say it was not going fast enough, but all the same there were tears in his eyes, especially when, one bed being hardly finished, a poor devil with the face of a dying man came along and was hastily shoved into it, who smiled as soon as he was quiet. Sometimes three or four would come at once, and we put them where we could while we nailed the final boards of their beds. The hammer-strokes hurt their heads, but they waited smiling.

Finally the Pamir set out, with her explosives in the aft hold and her sick in the forward hold and everywhere else. They were able to give us a young doctor and two nurses. I don't know why the three are n't dead of fatigue, with their two hundred sick and wounded. For medicines and antiseptics we had a single chest which was emptied before Matapan. The fever patients and those who had colic began to improve, and as it was necessary to set them on their feet again, the crew of the Pamir asked me to give them their wine and meat if there was n't enough for everybody. How can you punish birds like that when they break loose on land? For four days the men of the Pamir drank water and ate beans or the rice that was left from the Hindus, and nothing besides, for the storeroom was cleaned out. Fourgues gave all his rum, his *marc*, his cigarettes, and his cigars. I, who had n't any-

thing, turned over my handkerchiefs and shirts for dressings. We were lucky, for not one died in the crossing, because it was fine weather all the way and because Fourgues went very slowly in order not to shake the wounded.

They were nearly all fellows from Australia or New Zealand — bones, height, and not much fat. Those who got better told us a little of their affairs. They had thought they were leaving the Antipodes to defend old England on the front of France and they did n't at all expect to fight the Turks in a country where it can't be done. Even though mere privates are paid five or six francs a day, the fellows still find that it was not *chic* to give them a job "without any chance," as they say. But all that will be squared later; for the moment they are happy because after Malta they hope to visit London, which they have never seen.

At Malta they were all quickly landed. It can't be denied, the English squander money and consider war a sport instead of a vital matter as we do, but they have absolutely princely service in the rear. In their Gibraltar, Malta, and Egyptian establishments one is obliged to recognize this. The Pamir was scarcely in port when we were invaded by doctors and nurses by the dozen, and if we were able to care little for them on board, I am not worrying about how they will fare at Malta. But I find that country most uninteresting and can't understand why all the fellows are so enthusiastic about it.

Perhaps because after fifty or sixty days at sea they would enjoy Patagonia or Timbuctoo. The whole island is stone, no vegetation, hardly two good walks, and at night a dirty concert-hall where you are all packed in like herring. You must be better acquainted with it than I, for you are known — to your advantage — by the waiters of the resort where you broke several saucers, who laughed when I asked them if you had passed that way. It looks as though I shall never meet you, for there were not a few big French ships in the port, but not a sign of the Auvergne.

They told me that you were flying the admiral's flag now, the admiral's ship having gone into dry-dock and that you are promenading along the coast of Crete. Better luck next time, old man.

As for us, we left our shells, although the English warship had sailed for Portsmouth to be dismantled, as it would have taken a good six months before she could fire a gun again. She was pretty well smashed. The *youms* wanted us to go back to England with the ammunition, but Fourgues would n't go! He said that with the heat and without any means of ventilating the holds, he would not keep the shells on the Pamir for fear one of these days she would blow up without warning. The authorities kicked, saying that the ammunition would stay on their hands in Malta, no other ship having guns of the necessary model. But when Fourgues gets anything into his head neither God nor the Devil

can get it out, so they were obliged to unload all the ammunition. Now we are empty, but it is probable that they will send us to the Levant again where everybody pretends that decisive operations are to take place which will put the thing through this time. Fourgues is n't sure of that and, to speak of myself, neither am I. It would be better if they knew more clearly what they were going to do. Here is the Pamir, which for eight days has earned a thousand francs a day, doing nothing! Dón't you call that good money wasted?

And now there is a sirocco which is laying us all on our backs. Fourgues and I spend our time on the bridge, fanning ourselves and watching the manœuvres of the big water-bruisers which come and go. One has to acknowledge that it's pretty work. Fourgues is very enthusiastic, and you know he manœuvres well himself. It's like Paris in front of the gare Saint-Lazare, there are so many little and big boats and never a collision.

To speak again of myself, I have had a letter from La Rochelle and my fiancée writes that, as the war seems to be dragging out, there is no reason why we should wait for the end — that we could be married on the first opportunity. I should like to very much, but I want your advice. Do you think it is better to wait for peace and not marry impulsively? I have laid by a thousand francs, although the owner does n't give us a radish more now than in time of peace. With this we could start. Let us hope that

you can be in France for the wedding! Write me what you think. Sometimes I get discouraged, being always on the go and never knowing when it is going to end. I wish I were like Fourgues. When he has the blues, he abuses everybody all around and it passes off. But I'm not that way. He has just gone on land because the French attaché wishes to give him orders. Perhaps to-night we shall know where we are going. But the navy mail-boat is sailing at once and I don't want to miss it. Take care of yourself, old man, and write.

Archangel, September 15, 1915

My dear Friend, —

If you received three or four postcards that I have sent you during the last three months, you may well have asked yourself where the Pamir was going to stop. Cabes, Brest, Trondhjem — they are hardly on the same parallel! And now we are even higher up, but there is nothing beyond this and you need n't be afraid that we shall try to rediscover the North Pole. Everything is going very well, as you will learn. We have seen interesting things; it's not too warm in summer, and the old Pamir and all of us are pleased with our little saunter. At Malta, Fourgues came back with the order to leave immediately for Sfax in Tunis. He wanted to know why, but was told to execute orders without troubling himself further. So we got up steam and went out of the harbor that night. The English know how to

protect their harbors and ports. Wherever there are warships or loaded merchant vessels at anchor, they don't make them watch for submarines. Nets, buoys, an effective network of trawlers on guard — and the people inside can sleep on both ears. I would n't say that all this is sufficient to disperse submarines, but only that it saves needless vigils. In any case, it's better to guard against under-sea boats, acknowledging their existence, than to say publicly that they do not exist and actually to keep all the sailors on a strain.

But those are just my ideas. The Pamir set out for Sfax. In the morning we passed two French warships which must have been coming from Bizerta. Fourgues noticed that they were steaming straight ahead on their course and said that was a good way to be torpedoed. I reminded him that the navy does n't believe in submarines, so it is n't worth their while to zigzag and retard the run. Then he asked me why, if they don't believe in them, they keep everybody on the lookout with all guns set and general trembling; that they ought to choose, and if there are any, not to say that there are n't and make fools of all the sea-folk. I pass the problem on to you.

At Sfax we found a battalion of Algerian sharpshooters, Turcos, and other little niggers, which we were to transport to the south of Tunis with their horses and all their outfit. It seems that since the Italians entered the war, things have n't gone very

well in Tripoli. The Touaregs fell on them and pushed them back as far as Tunis, and so France is getting up an expeditionary corps down there in the south to teach the Arabs what's what. That makes one more place where transports are needed. They take whatever boats pass within reach, so the Pamir was called from Malta. At first they made us carry whatever we found wherever we were, though we never found anything where they sent us. But this time we left and arrived with a purpose.

The Arabs are good children and look like images in their coarse yellow and blue uniforms and they are as devil-may-care as the year forty. For officers they have rough-and-readies who drink hard and cram every one into cells the moment they even look as though they were grumbling. They would have liked to go to the Champagne to see what is happening there and are not so pleased to be heading for the desert to fight camels.

But they don't worry either, and as long as they fight somebody the place does n't matter. The Touaregs will find out what they are up against!

As a harbor, Cabes is not ideal and there was a moon hot enough to make the very pebbles perspire. I wonder how the Arabs endure it with their clothing of wool and camels' hair. But they claim that the heavier it is, the cooler. I preferred to take their word for it, and, as I was half-melted, found it simply overpowering to stay there four days waiting for orders. Not one of us set foot on land, not even

Fourgues, who loves to stretch his legs wherever we go. At the mere idea of moving in that furnace, every one elected to remain half-naked on board. Finally we got an order to make for Brest. Fourgues believed it was a joke and that the telegram had been improperly transmitted; but it was Brest all right. He thinks the owner is back of it, trying to have the Pamir take complicated circuits because that increases the money he draws. I believe he is right.

So we were off for Brest and very glad to leave the Mediterranean just as we were beginning to cook. Moreover, it was a long time since we had been home or read the papers: everybody thought perhaps we should stay awhile, with the chance of circulating a little and of getting news. You can't imagine how after a time it weighs on one not to know what's going on. On the Auvergne you get the radiograms from France and elsewhere and there are lots of messages passing around which explain things. But on the Pamir we are like blockheads because the papers never tell anything about maritime affairs anyway. Of course, there is the heading "Marine," and then — nothing! So the people at home think we are doing nothing. As they are absolutely ignorant about the sea, it's impossible to make them understand how we work on boats like yours and the Pamir. The navy is spoken of a little now, but all that we of the merchant marine have in the newssheets is when a cargo boat runs aground or collides with another or goes down. So the public imagines

that merchant vessels pass their time in port or in multiplying catastrophes; whereas they are at least as useful as the postmen, trainmen, munitions manufacturers, and the like, of whom the papers and the ministries are all the time talking. It's just that those fellows are on the spot and can make themselves heard. As for us, they are dead sure they won't see us arriving with our boats in the Place de la Concorde, so they censor the things that concern us. All the same, it 's not fair. But here I am, talking politics! I get that from Fourgues, but it's also because I have n't been to La Rochelle.

Barely arrived in Brest, they crammed us full of rifles for the Russians, who it seems are fighting in Poland with sticks of wood. I never saw so many rifles in my life, and there are whole cargoes like that, going from England and other places. The Pamir also carried revolvers, machine guns — all the small arms, in short. The cartridges went in another boat.

The authorities were hurrying us and coming on board every few minutes to see if we were ready to start, as we had to go with all speed to Trondhjem, in Norway, and await cargo boats from America and England in order to make the voyage to Russia with them under the protection of British cruisers. It was very pressing, — the Russians were waiting for their rifles and it was a question of minutes! Not one of us had time in the midst of all this to go once on land, excepting Fourgues, for matters of business. The more we loaded, the more came. We put the

cases everywhere, on the deck, in the fo'c'sle, in all the empty cabins, till there was hardly room to move. A fire would have been nice, with all those wooden cases and well-oiled implements! But Fourgues says he is lucky, and it would certainly seem so.

The Pamir left without my having needed to buy a railroad time-table and it made my heart ache to pass the Goulet. My fiancée will think that it was because I did n't want to, for she is like all the civilians, who imagine that one does as one pleases. . . . But you know how it is — after two or three days you get into harness again and you tell yourself that it will come out all right some day. As the Pas de Calais is n't safe, they ordered us to go to Trondhjem by way of the Irish Channel, and we saw some English destroyers cruising on the spot where a year ago they announced the war to us.

"Perhaps they are the same!" said Fourgues. "Eh, my boy, we have blown around some miles since that time and the Pamir is still on the job!" And that's the truth.

It is never very smooth around Norway, but the Pamir was so heavy that the combers went over her without her ever flinching. She was as slow as a tortoise, but in spite of that we got to Trondhjem ahead of time. As we are still without wireless, Fourgues could n't know whether we were in advance of the convoy or behind it, so, after rolling for a day in sight of the coast, he put into the fjord, for it seemed hardly worth while burning coal and wearing out

the boat for nothing. The semaphore signalled us that the convoy had not been seen passing at sea and that we should be notified. So Fourgues was relieved and proceeded to anchor at the farther end, amongst the other ships waiting there.

We waited two days and should have been rather bored, in spite of the bright nights, the midnight sun, the calm waters, and all those things which land-lubbers tell about who have never made a voyage in their lives nor had the wind slap them in the face, except that this fellow Fourgues can't drop anchor anywhere without turning up an old acquaintance. At Trondhjem it was an American with whom he had gone on a spree once upon a time on the coast of Chili and who, since the war, was plying between the United States, Norway, and Russia. They recognized one another through their field-glasses and the American — Flamigan or Flannigan — came over in his cutter. The two old cronies fell on each other's necks, — it had been ten or twelve years since they had met, — and all the time we stayed in the fjord, Fourgues, Flannigan, and I could n't have been pried apart. There was also Flannigan's mate, who smoked his pipe, drank his whiskey, and said nothing. If you ever meet Flannigan, go right at him without mincing things. He has a tongue loose at both ends and no fear of saying what he thinks.

Fourgues asked him at once if he had been to Germany, but he swore by all the gods that he had n't, though he carries merchandise wherever his company

orders him without feeling obliged to ask to whom it goes. He claimed that he had not been beyond Holland or Denmark, but that's not just certain. He might have said it so as not to hurt us, for he loves France, England a little less, — having an Irish father, — but above all is an American, and told us a lot of things by which it would be well for France to profit. It was amusing, all the same, to hear some one on affairs in the North, after having listened to Plantat — I believe I told you of him — on those of the Orient, with an interval of only four months. In this way one gets ideas about what is going on just outside the war and what is being thought here and there.

You won't mind if I tell you what I learn in one place and another, will you? You are n't obliged to believe any of it, although I write nothing but what I see or hear. And then, you know, fellows such as Plantat and Flannigan are like uncensored newspapers, so there is more chance of their speaking the truth.

Flannigan assures us that the Germans don't navigate much any more because they won't risk their merchant vessels in waters where the Allies are sure to nab them sooner or later; but that in the main it 's a clever trick to guarantee themselves ships that are not worn out, that are in a way almost new, in order to take over the commerce everywhere after the war when all our merchant vessels are on their backs. And at bottom, Flannigan can't be wrong, for if all

the ships are made to trudge like the Pamir, they will hold out as they can, but those of the Boches will be in quite a different state. Fourgues adds that it's not worth while trying to deny it, as the Allied nations are n't building a single ship, and anyway a ship can't be put together in five minutes like a regiment.

So from that side, if we don't do something in advance, we're sure to be skinned by the Boches when peace first comes, for they'll immediately take up all their former traffic as well as all that we have lost. The Germans are saying this among the neutrals, and what is more, according to Flannigan, their big commercial and industrial firms in Saxony or Westphalia are at present sending all over the world catalogues of products to be delivered during the war, from four to six months after the order. Is n't that the limit? Fourgues told Flannigan it was German bluff! But, no indeed! Flannigan went over to his ship to look for bills of lading of merchandise loaded at Rotterdam, Bergen, or elsewhere in the neutral countries, and proved to us, evidence in hand, that he had transported cargoes of products made in Germany since the war and that he was not the only one. It was going to Brazil, the United States, or wherever there were purchasers. He even stated that there had passed into France by way of the neutral countries certain hundreds of thousands of tons for which we had paid with our good money. What are we to believe, old man, when the newspapers and the min-

isters and the rest are always chanting to us that Germany is economically ruined and dying of starvation? Flannigan can't be lying, for the neutrals have to get merchandise from somewhere while France is producing nothing and England has all she can do looking after herself. As to food, Flannigan says that famine in Germany makes a good story, but that we had better tighten the blockade if we want them to tighten their belts. All this is not very pleasant to hear, but when the person who says it is sincere and has seen things, one can only regret that it's not known at home and, in any case, that nothing is done to remedy it. This is not to say that they are going to beat us, but just that we ought to keep them from laughing at us.

And they are n't depriving themselves, as we saw clearly in the German papers Flannigan brought from his boat and which he translated to us by the hour, as neither Fourgues nor I know the language. I 'll not tell all that, because you must know what they are saying from the wireless communications received on the Auvergne. But there are a lot of little details by which one can see how they pull the strings and how we move accordingly. For instance, we are forbidden to say where the English fleet is. Well, the illustrated penny papers present the Germans with photographs of the English fleet, the names of all the ships, their anchorage, the number of their guns, and everything. No one in France knows the names of the French generals in command of the armies nor the

number of sectors, but the German papers serve this up to their readers every morning. As to maritime espionage, Flannigan repeated a hundred times that the Germans know more than no matter what high admiral of the Entente, and that before the news of the movement of an Allied cargo boat or warship reaches Paris or London it is known in Berlin and corresponding orders have been given.

It would be nothing if they stopped there, but Flannigan says they have understood that the maritime problem will be solved for them by the submarine. He gave us details of such precision that we saw very well he had been in there and had heard the Germans talk at home. Then he recollected himself. But one thing is certain, the Germans are constructing a formidable type of submarine with guns, mines, etc., and though time is needed to manufacture a series of such craft, within a definite period they will have something thoroughly nasty ready in the way of under-sea warfare.

Fourgues repeated to Flannigan how he had been made fun of at the Navy Department in Paris when he talked of submarines, and Flannigan answered that it was our business if we wanted to wait till the show began, for the Germans would n't hesitate to announce it and that when we were once in the soup it would n't do us any good to call them pirates. They would simply go on sinking our ships. In regard to piracy, Flannigan, who, being a neutral, is above all a partisan of the freedom of the seas, says that every-

body is laughing at the Allies with our scruples of the Hague, and that the Germans won't be any more abashed on sea than on land, if they have the means, because the victor will make the new international laws and because, with their submarines, they will soon show us that the old ones no longer count. Flannigan reasoned well:—

"You established your German frontier by the Treaty of Frankfort and you announced this diplomatically to the world. Did that hinder Germany from invading you where she wanted to, or you from entering Alsace which you had recognized as a German possession? Therefore, in the rigors of war treaties no longer mean anything, for your first effort is to destroy them. And so why are you always chanting about the international laws? Germany does n't give a hang and is counting on victory to change them to her advantage. Why don't you do the same? Everything that links you with Germany is destroyed. Her signature is no longer valid, yet you continue to embarrass yourselves with it till the whole world believes that it is Germany who makes war while you follow after, six months or a year behind. It's like their cards for meat, sugar, the census, and all that, of which your papers poke fun, saying that Germany is at the end of her strength and that next winter she will be dead — you will come to that, too, if the war goes on. But Germany, who prepared for war during peace, is preparing for peace during war. She does at once, without seeming to be forced to it, that

which you will be forced and constrained to do by circumstances. The same with asphyxiating gas, liquid fire, and all the horrors she employs; when your *poilus* have had enough of dying like flies, you will understand that it is as natural to kill with fire and poison as with shells and balls. In short, my boys, if you don't want to have it go on for years and if you want the victory, bestir yourselves a little, for Germany is not going to omit a single means of tormenting you."

I should never get through telling you all that Flannigan said, and all was confirmed during a walk we took with him on shore. We talked with Norwegians who had been in Germany. They told us about the Zeppelins that are going up and down the North Sea and the Baltic every day, whereas there is not a single balloon around England or France.

So, of course, it is not worth while to add that we shall have them at sea.

As soon as an English destroyer arrives in the North Sea, the Zeppelins announce it in the ports and nothing is left outside but submarines and mines. Seriously, naval warfare is not what it was, old man, but the Boches are the only ones who seem to have perceived this. The Norwegians and the Swedes who were there did not say much — out of politeness, because we were French, but we understood that they think Germany has the advantage, and that, after having chosen to make war, she fights better than we.

Fourgues and I remembered all this when we left and we discussed it till we got to Archangel. The Pamir overtook the convoy at sea ten miles from Trondhjem and we went around Norway together. There were two English cruisers and four destroyers to escort fourteen merchant vessels. It was a fine convoy and all those ships together looked like a naval squadron, but the people who decide the formation of convoys would do well not to group boats going fifteen knots with those which can make seven or eight only by breaking their necks. After two days' sailing, the Pamir, which was about in the middle, began to lose sight of those the farthest in advance, though not more so than of those which were behind. The ships of convoy rushed from the north to the south to put us in order. We got together as well as we could, but after the North Cape there was a little session of rough seas and rolling and pitching and no more to be seen than in a tunnel. It lasted twenty hours, and when the weather was fine again, there were only six of us out of the fourteen. The fast ones had run ahead; the cripples had simply disappeared. Naturally none of the absent had wireless and the war-ships spent three days hunting for them. There was one with a damaged helm that had stuck on the pointed rocks up there and split in two. The people were fished out, but there's no danger of the cargo getting to the Russian front.

Finally our convoy arrived at Archangel all in a line more or less, in bunches of three or four. It is

the best time up here. After a month and a half or two months, everything will be frozen over, literally and figuratively. But it's not with fourteen cargoes nor fifty nor a hundred that one could give the Russians what they need! The fleet of the whole world would not be enough, but it is well to give them all we can. It may teach them — them and ourselves as well — to let the Germans get in everywhere! It seems that at the declaration of war three fourths of their factories were stopped because it was the Germans who ran them. Mechanics can't be taught in forty-eight hours, as I know after my experience with the turnspit of the Pamir; and if you add that the Boches simply appropriated all their factories in Poland, you can see why the Pamir and her pals must fly to Archangel with war-material. They loaded us at Brest without even giving me forty-eight hours to go to La Rochelle, under pretext that the Russians were waiting for us as for the Messiah. But here there's no hurry. They have already taken twenty days to unload a part of the fourteen ships and are not nearly through. At the time of writing, the Pamir has had only her forward hold emptied — the aft hold can wait! They sent us away from the docks because of another convoy which had arrived in the meantime and which they began to unload. When all these boats are half emptied, you may be sure they won't get away — they will simply mould in a corner.

And whether they hurry or not, it's all the same.

The things lie on the docks in piles in the rain and the wind. From time to time a train comes along in a leisurely manner, loads on a little pile without hurrying itself, and starts away again in two or three days. If it ever reaches the Carpathians it will be because the railroad goes downhill. Everywhere it's the same thing. They say that Russia is great, that she is invincible, that it will take ten years, that the Boches will get to Moscow . . . *Nitchevo!* Napoleon went away again and the Russian-Japanese business was n't a defeat. Such, old man, is the country where I find myself at present!

Fourgues could hardly stand it at first to see the Pamir lying by. Now he has found some friends, Russian navy and army officers who come on board and with whom he lunches on land. When I ask him if we are going to stay here, he answers, "*Nitchevo!*" in his Midi accent and the Russians simply double up. They drink hard and try to get him to do the same, but Fourgues never loses his head and uses the occasion to beat them at poker. If they will poison themselves up here, he will seize the opportunity to increase his income, the old fox. Mornings, during the cleaning, he tells me what they said when they were half full. Not a few of them are pro-German, especially among the nobility. It seems that there have been formidable scandals at court and in the ministries. When I try to pump him, Fourgues answers that he ought not to say anything, but that he is glad he is French, for, although at home we do all

sorts of stupid things, at least no one is working for the King of Prussia. As Fourgues never jokes about such matters, I believe he must have been hearing some pretty raw stories — about the railroads in particular. Cars are lost in Russia, and even whole trains, without any one knowing what has become of them. And what would they say in Brest if they knew that we lay here more than twenty days with their rifles!

Finally, yesterday, Fourgues said that he had had all he could stand of Archangel, vodka, and poker, — perhaps he had been losing! — and he got hold of an officer of the port who came along with his mouth full of hot air, and was promised that the Pamir will be unloaded to-morrow. I dare say that means eight days, but, at any rate, as one of the English cruisers will sail this evening for *Youmanie*,[1] I shall give her this letter, having finished my twenty pages. You can't call yourself neglected, — eh, old boy? But you are good, too, sending me as much news as you can and your books. I have finished the first volume of the maritime history. I will write about it if I remember. Except for reading, I am bored to death, for at the rate at which the Pamir has been going, I wonder where on earth they will send us next, and in the meantime, what is to become of La Rochelle? Let us hope that by the end of the year, we shall have peace or the wedding! Don't make fun of me, old boy. I have had about all I can stand.

[1] England.

Mudros, December 18, 1915

Here we are back in the Levant after all, but not without adventures, and it's really no joke to have made the grand tour of Europe from Archangel to the Dardanelles only to fall into our present scrape. At Toulon I received your long letter of the end of September in response to mine from Archangel, and I thank you. I shall speak of it if I have time, but for the moment I am going to tell you the adventures of the old Pamir for the last three months. You might call us the Wandering Jews! The more we go, the more they grab merchant-vessels wherever they find them, putting no matter what on the deck just so long as it leaves — and *aïe donc!*

Fourgues finally got his stuff unloaded at Archangel and succeeded in sailing without the convoy. He said it was n't worth while losing time with boats that can't get up any speed, and that when there are too many water-bruisers and not enough convoy ships it's just a little bit too good a target for submarines. Wherever we touched land I perceived that Fourgues had not been far wrong when he said, at the beginning, that the submarines were going to count later on. Even the officials are finding them embarrassing. What would happen if all those leather cushions had to circulate at sea! Perhaps they would find something to say besides: "Pshaw! Don't believe everything you hear, and, anyway, we sink so many that soon there won't be any more!" Of

course, after that there's nothing to do but pull in your ladder! Silence in the journals and everywhere else! . . . I tell you all my little ideas as the occasion gives rise to them.

The Pamir was told to go to Newcastle for orders and, in case there were none, to load with coal. We had been pretty well shaken up on account of our empty hold. On the return trip we met not a few boats going to Archangel. They needed to hurry, for the ice will soon begin, and if the Russians do not set themselves seriously to work, they can't break the Germans with what they received this summer. What good does it do not to tell the public the truth, when sooner or later it is sure to come out? They tell us that in two weeks or in three months everything is going to go wonderfully, and then, three months later, things are just the same or a little bit worse. And on whom shall the public lay the blame? On those who have deceived it! Or perhaps everybody knows that matters are not as they should be and that it's not worth while denying it. Then the public is obliged to believe the leaders are to blame, because they did n't know how to disentangle themselves. There's no way out of it, but those who govern are the ones that are on the wrong track.

At Newcastle they told us to go to Southampton to take the equipment for the English expeditionary forces in France. We had just enough coal to get us across and the Pamir went down the North Sea and the Pas de Calais, the papers everywhere saying that

the Pas de Calais is completely closed to German submarines by means of nets and a host of perfected schemes; saying too, that to reach the Atlantic or the Mediterranean, they will have to go around by way of Scotland, and as they have n't sufficient radius of action there is nothing further to be feared from them. I don't know much about it, but having seen what the Germans have done elsewhere, I expect them to find some way of getting through those perfected dodges and also of constructing submarines that will go to the ends of the earth. It's as plain as the nose on your face and to say the contrary is to act the ostrich. Fourgues says there will be a painful awakening, but that everybody will put it off onto the Boches instead of recognizing that we have n't taken proper precautions. He gets into fine rages, but as for me, if I can only go to La Rochelle I ask for nothing more.

At Southampton we took on automobiles and tractors for the English army and carried them to Havre. I had time in England to make a trip on land, where there are posters everywhere, begging folks to enlist. Just the same the English look more as though they were bestirring themselves than last year when they regarded this as a colonial war. That's not to say they have as yet been affected as seriously as we. They still leave a great many Boches at large, their business firms continue to ship cargoes to the neutral neighbors of Germany, and then, they can't with one stroke make over an army, all ready to fight.

The majority of their regular officers have already been killed and they are obliged to make captains and commandants out of good cricket and golf players. It will take time for them to form. As to equipment, it's the same thing — they have hardly begun to mobilize their factories for war production because they did not want to stop British exportation. But we can't say much, for we have done the same and it's hardly a matter of weeks since France began to go to England, America, and Spain for materials — where there are plenty. The Germans went to work at the right moment and we lost a good year.

There is a fine mess at Havre and they say Rouen is the same. Really it's astonishing how the responsible people let cars and merchandise pile up in the ports. That comes doubtless from the general ignorance in France as regards all maritime matters and also from the fact that the high naval officers who command the commercial ports know nothing about traffic. Fourgues has to fight to get his stuff unloaded at Havre every time. They piled it in a heap on the dock, and when we left it was still there in the rain.

While we were there we got orders to go to Marseilles, to get a load for the army of the Orient. The Pamir could have taken from the wharf at Havre some hundreds of tons destined for Toulon or Marseilles; in this way the transportation would have cost less. But everything was arranged for it to go by rail and we left without anything. Once more we went around Spain without paying for our trip, and

even so arrived ahead of time, as our cargo had not all reached Marseilles — because the trains were held up as usual. The papers may relate mountains and marvels about the preparations made and all the success that will attend us on all the fronts next spring, but we who do the work of transporting necessities see plainly that not with our present manner are we going to surpass the Germans in speed.

I am not the one to sin through admiration of the Boches, and if for no other reason I should have a grudge against them for the dog's life they have made us lead for a year and a half, and because on their account I don't see when I can go home. But just the same, there are things they do better than we and which we should learn from them if we don't want to lose months and years. How does it help us to refuse to imitate them in such matters as are as good for us as for them? We shan't become savages by merely looking ahead! We shan't be much further along when we shall be obliged to imitate them. In the maritime history you lent me I read recently that the Coalition beat Napoleon because, after having been whipped, they copied him. And it took them fifteen or twenty years, and if they had caught on sooner it would n't have taken so long. Why is it that in France we still run the limited and express trains which I saw arriving in Havre and Marseilles? The Norwegians and Swedes told us that for a long time the Germans have been running all their trains at the same speed, the passengers in between the

freight. In that way traffic is not delayed, whereas in France, with the idea of making people back of the lines believe that the war is being won like a game of manilla, they put on a lot of fast trains which are only of use for the slackers and which hold up the shells and war-material at all the stations. So how can you expect things to arrive?

I ruminated about all this when the Pamir was sent to anchor at L'Estaque, near Marseilles, for five or six days, as there was n't a single foot of unencumbered dock in the port of Marseilles and all because of the obstructed railroads. One day twenty-four of us were rolling and pitching in the mistral; another day there were thirty-two, empty and loaded, each making a thousand or two thousand francs a day doing nothing.

I tell you, if a Boche submarine came into this road, which is open and without protection, along about one or two in the morning, she could send a good half-dozen of craft like the Pamir to the bottom and get away before any one had time to say a word! But the land-lubbers, with or without service stripes, have pronounced it all a pleasant joke and have said that submarines would n't dare come near the coast of France, either here or on the Atlantic! After that, all we can do is to collect ourselves and await the torpedo with arms folded.

Finally they towed us from L'Estaque to Marseilles, and then, as the authorities had made us sit for nearly a week without doing a thing, we must

take on board three thousand tons of cargo right off, without unharnessing. The country would be in danger if the Pamir was n't out and off in forty-eight hours. They made us roll down into our hold the contents of thirty trains, which came in solemn procession, night and day, without stopping. The Pamir was away off at the end of the earth in the basin of Arenc and all the stuff was for Mudros — carriages, provisions, shells, guns, shoes — everything, I assure you.

They were tumbled in as they came and I had to stow them. You can imagine how easy it was. Fourgues never ceased foaming at the mouth, saying that if we had bad weather the cargo would start dancing around by itself. But they told him to shut up, and in choice language! There was one train which came with cases for Milo. There had been a mistake, and they turned out not to be for the Pamir, but for another boat. They arrived about midnight of the second night, and I said to the officer in charge that it must be an error. What did I get? He fished me up like a cod, saying that Mudros, Milo, and the whole shop, they were all in the Orient, and that he was ordered to pack into the Pamir all the trains that came and that I was not going to send that one back when they were already late. What about that for an idea of geography!

So I shipped the things because the army gentleman ordered me to, but when I informed Fourgues in the morning, he told a chap in the navy who had

come to give us our orders for the route. And the navy chap was furious, and said that we were idiotic to load on stuff for Milo when the rest of the material was for Mudros. The officer had gone for his coffee. The navy chap went after him and they must have exchanged a few pleasantries. At last it was agreed that the Pamir should stop at Milo and unload the cases and then go on to Mudros. We closed the holds and battened down the hatches and were ready to leave our moorings when another train with a dozen cases of airplanes pulled in and came alongside. The non-commissioned officer in charge jumped on board and asked for the commander: —

"Are you the Pamir?"

"Rather," said Fourgues.

"All right; here are twelve airplanes for you to take."

"Well, *mon vieux*, we can tow them if you wish, but as for taking twelve airplanes on board, it's now too late, our hold is full."

"Not at all! I've been waiting at Miramar for two days and I just got the order to-night to send them by the Pamir. It is of the utmost urgency!"

"Oh, yes. And how long has your utmost urgency been on the way from Paris?"

"For twenty-three days!"

What can one do, old man? Such strokes simply disarm one! When Fourgues heard that the poor devil had been on the great railroads of France for twenty-three days with twelve airplanes in his arms,

he said we would take all we could. We found places for six, three forward and three aft. The cases are regular monuments, and when they dangle at the end of the winch you have to watch out so as not to get a corner in the jaw. And to stow all that! They were exactly the full width, however, and we served lines over them and lashed them to starboard and port. They rose as high as the bridge.

At this point our old friend the army officer returned to the charge and said that, as the Pamir was ordered to take all twelve cases, we must load the remaining six in a second tier on top of the first. Then Fourgues let out a broadside. He produced oaths that I had never heard before and I assure you they were great! He said that his boat was as full as an egg; that it was not the custom to pile cargo higher than the masts; that he had to see to navigate; that he was not sure the six cases we had would n't pitch overboard with the first good blow, and that the other six might go by the air-route, perhaps, but certainly not on the Pamir. Thereupon he gave the order to sail and we skipped out, leaving the three citizens, the railroad-man, the army officer, and the sailor, giving it to each other on the dock.

Fortunately we had no really bad weather from Marseilles to Milo — nothing but ordinary rolling and pitching, just enough to worry us about the stowage of our cargo. We could hear hollow sounds of boxes knocking around the hold and the stuff must have been in a nice state. We did n't open

it up, but it will be lovely and we are the ones that will catch it! But Fourgues will make plenty of music, for he does n't like to keep still when it's somebody else's fault. I don't understand just how the airplanes are packed in their cases. Up there on the deck they get plenty of motion, and no matter how much we tighten the lines with which they are lashed, every time the boat rolls they shift a little with a "*Boom!*"

At Milo no one wanted to unload the cases we had taken from the wrong train because the head of the military unit for which they were destined, who should have been there, had gone away several days before. We have n't yet been able to ascertain his whereabouts. It's the same old thing over and over — enough to drive you mad!

In the harbor at Milo there were a lot of war-vessels, — French, English, Russian, and Italian, — for it seems we are ready to fall upon the Greeks if they keep on. The English, who got here first, did n't wait long before installing nets and a barrier against submarines. It's very nice to say in the papers and from the rostrum that submarines don't exist, but it's better to take precautions, for they are beginning to sink ships a little bit everywhere. Fourgues says he should prefer to be in the wrong, but that everything he has thought about it is beginning to be realized and that it's aggravating to have been a Cassandra on this particular point.

All this time the Pamir continues to be without

wireless or guns or anything for protection and she is not the only one. At Milo and at Mudros, where we are now, out of every ten ships seven or eight have no wireless, and I want to tell you that it's something to hear the captains and officers of those cargo-boats! But all they say and all they think, what difference does it make? Everybody knows they will keep on just the same! If they are done for by a submarine the paper will say, "Boche piracy!! Such and such a boat sunk! She transported no military personnel!" *Tiens!* It's simply too idiotic the way things at sea are run.

The Pamir went straight on to Mudros without unloading anything. You can have no idea of the moving that's going on all over the country. They are evacuating everywhere. Good-bye, Constantinople! Good-bye to the end of Turkey! Good-bye, Gallipoli, the Dardanelles, the coast of Asia! Good-bye, everything! All the material and personnel that is not too badly damaged is going to Saloniki. We are going to save Serbia if it is n't too late. Suvla is evacuated. The English left millions in material which they set on fire. Seddul-Bahr, Kum-Kalé, and Gaba are being rolled into one to make an army of the Orient, and it's not a bit too soon to put some people at Saloniki, for where, I wonder, are the Boches going to be stopped? It seems that this was an idea of our *Président du Conseil.* It's a damned good thing he put his finger on the spot, for the Dardanelles business was done for several

months ago. With an army in Saloniki, and a French-English army at that, we can keep the Boches from getting down any farther. What could n't they do in the Mediterranean, I wonder, if they had Greece and the Peloponnesus? But all that is politics again.

The Pamir is waiting at Mudros. All the empty vessels are taken to hasten the evacuation. We are as full as an oyster, and we are left here because there's no room at Saloniki. Where should we unload our different sorts of merchandise, our airplanes, and our victuals? I don't know any better than you! But one thing I do know — nothing of all we have brought from Marseilles will ever reach its destination! Oh, it will be used somewhere or other, but everything in this country is upside down and all the Pamir can do is to empty her hold onto the dock designated without troubling about what becomes of it. And that's not very gay, old man!

And how long are we going to stay here? Fourgues is going crazy, but that does n't help matters. The other ships come and go, but the Pamir receives no orders. We hope she will go to Saloniki and give us a glimpse of what is going on there, but ever since the beginning of the war nothing we have hoped for has happened, so I don't care much what it is as long as it can't be La Rochelle.

So long, old man! I got your last from Bizerta when the Auvergne was in dry-dock. You gave me a good bit of navy talk and I should like to comment on it, but a boat is about to leave for Malta and I

want to get this letter off. All that I can say is that it seems to me not much better on the warships than on water-bruisers like the Pamir. May God grant that on land, in politics, and the diplomatic service they are cleverer than our naval chiefs! My sole consolation is that the Germans seem to be more pumpkin-headed than we; else, with their preparation and our mistakes at the beginning, they would have eaten us up long since. Not having done so, they won't be able to. With this consoling thought I wish you a Happy New Year and hope that we shall see each other in 1916. *Je l'embrasse.*

PART THREE

ALGIERS, *January* 30, 1916

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

Guess whom I met yesterday! I'll give you a thousand shots at it. Blangy! You have been asking yourself — at least I have — what in the world had become of the old rascal, who has never given us a sign of life. I ran into him in the arcades and I started to blow him up. He maintained that you and I were the loafers because we had leisure, whereas he had none. I soon saw that he had n't changed and was as lazy as ever about writing. As he had a free evening we took our *apéritif* together and he invited Fourgues to join us at dinner. Blangy is n't afraid of him any more, now that he is in command of a trawler; indeed he treats Fourgues quite as an equal. During dinner he told all his adventures and there was material enough to fill an almanac. For six weeks he has been in command of a half-rotten trawler as big as a piano, with a gun as heavy as a pea-shooter, which would n't be capable of going after even a crippled submarine. There are not a few like that, says Blangy, especially along the coasts of Africa and Tunis. Most of the time there is something that won't go — rudder, truss, steering-gear, condenser, pistons, or boilers; one repairs as one can. For the rest, there

are storms for which the submarines don't give a hang, but which keep the poor old trawlers from navigating. So you can see just what our surveillance against the submarine amounts to!

Fortunately the papers say that in three months not one will be left, we have sunk so many! Blangy is not of this opinion, nor Fourgues either, nor I. I can write you this, my old friend of the Auvergne, for I have a sort of an idea you think the same. We are not officials, we four! Blangy says to send you greeting, and he laughed when I told him that on you, the seaman, they had played the same trick as on him, putting you behind a gun instead of on the bridge. He hopes that you will also get a trawler or anything else that will make you navigate. He is satisfied in spite of his misadventures on his rotten raft. He feels that he is living. His fever and rheumatism have left him, and he asks for nothing but the opportunity to rake a submarine, or at least that it should n't be the other way around!

Having given you enough about Blangy, I will return to the adventures of the Pamir from Mudros as far as Algiers — that is to say, for the last month and a half. You may be surprised to have me write so soon and I'll tell you why at once. We picked up at sea the crew of the cargo boat Mer-Morte, of the same company as ourselves, which had been torpedoed the night before. In one of the boats was Villiers, engineer of the Mer-Morte, and the owner authorized Fourgues to keep him on board. That

being the case, I passed half my work over to him, — the engine, that is, — and I have a little more time. I can write you more — at least, if it does n't bore you, in which case you have only to warn me!

You remember that I wrote of the Pamir lying idle at Mudros with a cargo for a lot of different military units. The shipment had not yet reached its destination because we arrived in the midst of moving. Every one was breaking camp — everywhere, Gallipoli or Asia. Some were returning to France, others going to Egypt, the majority bound for Saloniki, for the army of the Orient, and no one to tell us what to do with our three thousand tons and our six cases of airplanes. Fourgues went to see the French admiral, then the English admiral, then the commander of the English base, then the commander of the French base, and all the authorities. Everybody said, "The Pamir? The Pamir? Three thousand tons? Munitions of war? Six airplanes? What to do with you? You are asking for orders?"

"What good does it do," said Fourgues, "to have admirals and commanders of bases in the countries where things are red-hot if they are n't capable of taking the initiative and getting the orders from Paris for a poor little bark of three thousand tons?" Of course, the orders had n't arrived. They have other fish to fry in Paris and London. We should still be there if one fine evening Fourgues had n't said at dinner: —

"Get up steam, sonny, and we'll start at dawn

with to-morrow's convoy. We'll go to Saloniki. They must be needing the stuff there, for it seems that the army of the Orient is going into Bulgaria. After the Pamir has left Mudros they can't catch us because they have n't given us any wireless and at Saloniki we shall see what we shall see!"

He was as good as his word. The Pamir set out the next day, getting behind four big water-bruisers that were leaving the *barrage* and nobody said a word. Fourgues was enjoying it on the bridge.

"You see, the French admiral thinks that I have orders from the commander of the military base; the commander thinks that I have orders from the admiral; between the two of them they would have let my cargo mould, whereas to-morrow General Sarrail will be very much pleased to get it."

Perhaps he was right. Perhaps, though, when they saw the Pamir put out, the admiral and the base-commander were only too glad to be rid of the old trombone-player and said to themselves that they hoped he would go and hang himself somewhere else. Fourgues said that it would be a lesson to him, and that henceforth when the authorities had no orders to give him, he should give them to himself, because it was disgusting to let the stockholders make a thousand or fifteen hundred a day without doing anything.

The Pamir got into Saloniki the next morning after waiting half the night in front of the harbor defenses. None too soon the French admirals have

begun to put nets at the entrances of harbors, instead of leaving them as at the beginning of the war when the submarines had only to come in. I tell you, old man, the Germans discovered this before we ever thought of it, and the Austrians, too, in their North Sea, Adriatic, and Baltic ports; and they will discover many other things in which we shall be six months or a year behindhand. The thing that takes my breath away is that I chatted with not a few young sailors of your navy and they all see it clearly. When I say young, I mean fellows between thirty and forty-five, the kind the English have already dubbed old fogies! In the French navy these old fogies have n't the right to an opinion, but nevertheless they see. It can't be said that they are ignorant of their profession, having followed it for eighteen or twenty years; nor can it be said that they are n't capable of commanding, because in England they are already commanding a squadron or a naval base, and any day one can see an old French naval lieutenant of forty-five with three stripes going to ask for orders of a young English admiral of forty-two with three stars. The contrary has never occurred. Does that mean that the French don't happen to be as clever as the English? Tell me if you agree, or if, after your contact with the navy, you think that the French admirals don't believe at all in rejuvenating the higher grades? I should like to tell you all I think about it and what Fourgues thinks too, but I see that my letter has not finished

with the history of the Pamir and so I must wait for another time.

It happened that our stuff was mighty welcome at Saloniki. The army people fell upon it as though we were saviors. Guns, gun-carriages, picks and shovels, and everything else the Pamir had — there was none too much of all this in Macedonia, and all the vessels receive the same warm welcome. There are hundreds of thousands of tons to be moved from one point to another and nobody dares take the initiative because all war-supplies are under the grand quartermaster-general of France, and the grand quartermaster-general is n't here and does n't give any orders, but if any one on the spot gives any he does n't like it and commands the exact opposite, and there's no getting along with a system like that. So you can imagine if they did n't think Fourgues was the real thing to have brought his three thousand tons without any one having to ask for them. It did n't take long to unload and the airplanes were especially welcome. No one knew how they had got along without them. The six others, which the Pamir left at Marseilles, had been sent at once to the French front, where there is so much breakage and where more airplanes are used than in the army of the Orient, which is only a side-issue of the war. But the six we brought — no one at Saloniki appeared to know what had become of them, yet they were much needed, for the Fokkers and the Taubes came practically every day and

there were none too many battle-planes. That's what ours were. We stayed at Saloniki five days, and at the end of three those battle-planes had already gone up and had sugared the Bulgarians. Right away Fourgues was satisfied and he said to me: —

"See here, kid, I begin to understand this war. There are two kinds of people: the scribblers, administrative species, who have the authority and who let the *poilus* be killed administratively and the boats sunk administratively. When the papers have all been made out and their responsibility well covered up, they rub their hands and don't give a damn. And then there are the others: folks like you and me and some millions of poor devils. We drudge and wear out our skins without needing to make out any papers, but we are the ones that keep the shop going and win the war. No one thanks us, but if France holds up her end, it is because of us of the ships and the trenches. On land they have n't yet found out how to get heavy artillery like the Germans, so where the Boches send a shell of large calibre, we send a *poilu* and the blood of our *poilus* compensates for the inferiority of our artillery. At sea it's the same thing, except that the submarine takes the place of the heavy artillery, and the ships which go to the bottom take the place of the *poilus* who let themselves be pounded. All that is n't good to put in the newspapers, but it's the truth just the same. It will go on and on, but in the end we shall

be obliged to do as the Germans do instead of scoffing at them."

Fourgues is generally in the right, and the things he says come to pass six or eight months later, so when you tell him he is a pessimist, he has only to say, "Wait and see!" And when his predictions are realized, the people who said they never would be have forgotten what he told them in the first place, and they brag of how they had been predicting this for a long time! Then he gets into a rage and announces some more things which astonish them and they repeat that it can't be so because the newspapers are saying quite the opposite. Five or six months later, behold Fourgues again in the right!

Have you noticed the following on the Auvergne? Once in a while one has a true, honest, real tip — as, for example, when Fourgues or I tell things that we have seen with our eyes and heard with our ears on the Pamir in Archangel, or Norway, or England, or somewhere else. Not jokes, but things like "two and two make four" and "two hands have ten fingers." Well, then, Fourgues and I spin our little yarns when we are asked to, as though it might interest people and as though they wanted to know the truth. *Eh bien*, not at all! The higher placed they are, the less they want to know the truth. When you have told them something they know is true, they answer, "Above all, do not repeat this! We must not trouble public opinion!" One would ask nothing better than to keep still, on condition

that the people in high places do whatever is necessary to remedy the evils they say must be hidden. But when you see that it's not at all in order to remedy them in silence that they command you to hold your tongue, but only that they may sit with their arms folded doing nothing while those who are not informed imagine that everything is being done — well, old fellow, it's pretty rank!

Or say that these same official people don't know that what you tell them is true, — not officially, that is. Then there's no use trumpeting it into their ears. They listen to nothing, hear nothing, do nothing. Fourgues told at Mudros, at Saloniki, and at other places the stories Flannigan told him in Trondhjem about the kind of submarine warfare the Germans were preparing for us. As he has an unholy memory for details, he repeated things from the German papers, with figures and all particulars. *Eh bien!* All the naval chiefs made fun of him as they did in the navy a year and a half ago. When he spoke of the Cressy, the Hogue, the Aboukir, the Lusitania, the Bouvet, the Ocean, the Gambetta and all the others that have gone down, they answered that it was pure accident; that the Germans could n't do anything more because their submarines had been sunk — that all measures had been taken, that in less than six weeks the naval war would be over, and that it was only necessary to read the papers! Whereupon Fourgues, somewhat astonished, pointed to the papers where "Marine" is printed with one or two

blank columns beneath. But when he assumes that these columns hide something, he is told that he is a coward and a sower of panic. Then he gets furious and holds his tongue for fear of saying too much. But he confides to me that with harebrains like that to look after things at sea, with those on the ships too old and those in the ministries indifferent, we can expect anything of the Germans who don't travel four roads at once. It's lucky for those who direct the English and French naval affairs that the public understands nothing about it, otherwise they would have their dirty linen washed in Parliament as was done for the army and we should be taking precautions instead of heading for catastrophes.

But I am wandering from the Pamir. When we had emptied out our stuff, the military authorities needed to send a lot of colonials back to Algiers, — Arabs and Soudanese who had been in the Orient almost a year and were shaking with the cold. At Saloniki there was none but the Pamir ready for the voyage — all the other boats were waiting to be unloaded. So we took on three hundred Africans. They did n't make much noise, the poor fellows, what with their shivering and seasickness. They asked only one thing — to be let alone. All we had to do was to give them bread and water twice a day. They swallowed a little and vomited the rest of the time.

From Saloniki to Algiers we followed the secret route indicated by the French and English Admiralties. Fourgues took it, not for security, but for a joke.

"What will you bet, my boy?" he said when he had traced the route out on his chart. "Will you make a bet with me?"

"I should like to very much, captain, but about what?"

"*Eh bien*, look here! The Pamir is going to follow this highly secret route from Saloniki to Algiers. Therefore, the Boches are n't acquainted with it; therefore, it's protected against submarines; therefore, we are required to follow it — is n't that so?"

"But I don't see —"

"What will you bet that before we get in the Pamir will either be torpedoed on this route — which we are ordered to follow — or that we pick up the lifeboats of some boat that has been torpedoed? Are you on?"

"Before going into it, I want to know why. For, of course, it is n't just to catch their prunes that we are sent out on a safe, secret, and protected course."

Fourgues roared like a whale. He would n't explain, but he said: —

"If I lose, I'll give you a box of cigars. If I win, you stand two middle watches for me extra."

"I will, indeed, but why?"

"I'll tell you afterwards."

He would n't give in and there was no explanation, but the old fox was right! Between Malta and Algiers we came upon the lifeboats of the Mer-Morte which had been torpedoed fifteen hours before.

We discovered them early, at about half-past six

in the morning. I had the watch. Fourgues said to me when he knocked off at four: —

"Don't leave the secret route, eh, my boy? At exactly five o'clock, turn to the west — you'll see — at the point I have marked on the chart with a pencil. At that point the secret routes from north, south, east, and west cross each other. All the boats pass there. We'll go that way."

I made it just as close as I could. There was a nice little breeze from the east pushing in our backs and rolling us about, as we were empty. The Africans were vomiting desperately in the corners and we could n't see a hundred yards.

I had been going due west for almost an hour and a quarter and had just lit one to keep myself awake, when the lookout on the mast shouted: —

"Wreck two points to starboard!"

I looked and did n't see a thing, but all the same I put the helm over and steered as the lookout had said, when he began to sing again: —

"Second wreck, straight ahead of you at three hundred yards!"

There was no need to awaken Fourgues. He leaped from his cabin to the bridge with his field-glass and made out two lifeboats before you could wink.

"That's all right, my boy! There are two boats, quite full. We'll get them. I take the watch and you go back to pick the poor fellows up. Have wine and coffee and blankets heated. They must have

been there ever since last night and are probably soaked with this chop a yard high."

Fourgues manœuvred nicely, and in five minutes we got the men aboard, although the two lifeboats had drifted five hundred yards apart. He came alongside so well in the wind that they were in quiet water, and as there were only sailors and not an elephant in the lot, they climbed our ladder without having to be asked. They were rather moist. I sent them to dry in the boiler-room, and after they had drunk their coffee and hot wine they snored the entire day and were as fresh as could be by night.

There was only one officer, the engineer Villiers of whom I have already spoken. We put him to bed at once in Muriac's cabin and were a little worried about him as he was delirious all the way to Algiers. A shell had burst in the engines of the Mer-Morte, smashing a cylinder and killing two men, and he does n't yet know how he ever came out of it. Since day before yesterday he has been getting better, and here is the story he told us: —

The Mer-Morte left Toulon with a cargo of shells, gun cartridges, explosives, and all the outfit for the army of the Orient. As usual, no wireless, no guns, nothing — just like ourselves. She took the secret route from Toulon to Saloniki, the same as the Pamir, only in the opposite direction. They were told that the route was guarded from one end to the other. "That story is all right for civilians!" said Villiers. "It would take at least a thousand boats to guard

the route from Toulon to Saloniki and there are n't a hundred on the whole Mediterranean." I ought to add that the Mer-Morte has been knocking about almost as much as the Pamir since the beginning of the war, particularly in the Mediterranean, and that Villiers thinks about things much the same as Fourgues and I, and says that his captain, who went down with the ship, poor fellow, was of a similar mind. All the same it's a joke that the people who do the real work of the sea think alike on the subject of the German submarine and say it is n't a bluff, while the land-lubbers and the papers and the ministers all say not to make too much of it because it's going to be over in two weeks. Which two weeks? Villiers thinks it is pretty bad, having just been through it, and although he is only an engineer and not a navigating officer, he said things which Fourgues considered quite just.

To return to Villier's story. The Mer-Morte, with her five thousand tons of projectiles and other munitions, followed the secret route to the spot where they were to head east for the Malta channel. She had not met a single patrol or guard. This was no surprise to Villiers, for he knows that patrolling is impossible. He asked us if the Pamir had met any patrols from Saloniki to Algiers, and Fourgues showed him the whites of his eyes, which was a good answer! Nor did it surprise Villiers either. He told us all this in port, and you know that when a fellow has just escaped death, has lost his captain, his first

officer, ten men, his ship, five thousand tons of shells, and barely missed going with them, in spite of yourself you listen to what he says a little more than to the assininities of the land-lubbers.

So the Mer-Morte came that evening to the turning-point in the route. There, a submarine emerged five or six hundred yards behind her and fired a blank shot to stop her. The commander of the Mer-Morte was a fellow who was n't afraid of anything. As he had five thousand tons of munitions on board, he thought he ought not to let himself be sunk because they were needed by the army of the Orient; so he sent an order to Villiers in the engine-room to fire up for all he was worth and keep her at top speed for half an hour, when, as night was falling, he would be able to lose the submarine. Villiers did all he could and the Mer-Morte got up to eleven knots and a half. But the submarine was faster than that and gained on the Mer-Morte and sent some shots into her. She was no more armed than the Pamir and could n't reply. The commander, seeing that he would be sunk, thought he would try to sink the submarine, so he came about and headed for it. You know what that was like — like a foot soldier against a machine gun. The submarine waited a little, then sent two shells onto the bridge, killing the commander, his first officer and the others, and two more right into her hull near the water-line, which shattered the engine and boilers, but missed Villiers.

So the Mer-Morte had to stop — no captain, no

steam — a wreck. The submarine stood near and sent an officer out in a *youyou*, who came aboard her. Villiers went up to the deck with all the crew who had not been killed. He was not yet delirious. The submarine officer knew French well and was very polite.

"You are to launch your lifeboats and take the crew in them. You, officer, will please accompany me to the bridge. Oh, we saw! We killed the commander and an officer of the watch. Our gunner is very good. But there's something on the bridge that I must see."

Villiers followed him. The officer was accompanied by two sailors armed with revolvers and the submarine stood close by with her gun leveled. He went to the navigation-room and looked at the chart of the Mediterranean, upon which the commander of the Mer-Morte had traced the secret route from Toulon to Saloniki. He compared this with a chart which he had brought with him from the submarine. When he saw that they matched, he said to Villiers:—

"That's all right. We know where all the boats go; our spies have not misinformed us. With secret routes like this we are sure of not losing time because you all go the same way. The patrol boats are not very numerous, as you may have noticed; when there are any we stay out of range and come up again when they are gone. That simplifies our job."

Villiers was astounded, but the other was very polite and smiled.

"Oh, it was n't by chance! Our submarine was

waiting for the Mer-Morte, which left Toulon day before yesterday evening with five thousand tons of munitions for the army of the Orient. The same day the Saint-Artémise left with coal for Bizerta, the Jeanne-Marguerite with coal for Navarin, and the battleship Lyon for Malta. They all passed this way during the day. We saw them and let them go. We don't work except when there's no risk and when it's worth while. Five thousand tons of munitions! We are very well informed, and then with these secret routes it is so much more convenient!"

When he had finished carefully consulting the charts of the Mer-Morte, the Boche handed Villiers a memorandum-book with stubs and asked him to sign it: —

"It's for our accounts and our part of the prize-money," he said. "Of course, we should be believed if we said we had sunk a vessel, but it is better to have the signature of one of the officers. It's more certain. In Germany, it's not the same as it is with you. The more we destroy at sea, the more they pay us. We are making real war. So this little affair of the Mer-Morte, with her five thousand tons of munitions, is worth ten thousand marks to my commander, five thousand to me, and a thousand to each of the men of the crew of my submarine. It's nice, is n't it? Ah! I recommend that you get into your lifeboats at once and row hard. I'm going to put grenades in the forward hold, and *dame*, within a quarter of an hour there will be some fine fireworks!"

Villiers said to him that at least he would permit the sailors to take some provisions and wine and clothing, as the lifeboats might be long at sea.

"What's the use of that? We are not savages," answered the Boche; "all the boats pass this way. There are some carrying nothing of importance passing within twenty-four hours — the Creuse, the City of Birmingham, the Pamir, the Santa Trinita. We shan't do anything to them — there are others more interesting. We are well informed! Among those four there will surely be one to pick you up!"

Villiers got off in the lifeboat and they rowed as hard as they could against the wind. The Mer-Morte blew up twenty minutes later. He had time to take along all the fellows that had been killed and we buried them in Algiers. But he had held up under the blow as long as he could. Toward midnight the cold, the wet, thirst, and all that he had been through made him delirious, and when we arrived he had to have a rope under his arms and be hoisted into the Pamir — he was in shreds.

He is almost well now. We reached Algiers day before yesterday and set on shore the Arabs of the Army of the Orient, who will tell this story in their huts. Fourgues and I are going with Villiers tomorrow to see the military authorities and leave a written report and make a verbal one of the affair of the Pamir and the Mer-Morte. I will write you later. The mailboat for France leaves soon and we don't know what the Pamir is going to do. Good-bye, old

man. I hope Villiers is going to stay on the Pamir. Then I can write you more often.

Saloniki, March 13, 1916

DEAR OLD MAN, —

You never can guess what the Pamir trundled up here? Firewood, just plain firewood! To be sure, there are lots of other things on top, but it's mostly firewood. It appears that this commodity is scarce in France and every other country, and as in the army of the Orient they had about as much as I have in the middle of my eye, we brought two thousand tons. But I am anticipating. Let us return to Algiers where I left you after we had picked up the castaways of the Mer-Morte.

The authorities of the port received us coolly enough. Villiers, Fourgues, and I told our little story and handed in our written statements for the Navy Department. It was all as clear as daylight, but still they looked rather black. They asked Villiers a lot of questions about the route, the manœuvre, the hour when the submarine arrived, where the officer came on board, where the Mer-Morte went down — how can I remember them all! Do you see it? Villiers was in the engine-room watching over his boilers and pistons. He answered that he did n't know what took place during that time and that he had put in his written report all that he knew of the affair. He said that he was the engineer and not an officer of the bridge. But they did n't

like it. As I understood the thing, the Mer-Morte ought not to have been torpedoed just at that spot. No matter where else and nothing would have been said, but there — no!

I had an explanation of this the day after, knocking around on shore with a little midshipman in the quartermaster's department, who had some inside information. He told me that the place where the Mer-Morte was sunk is just at the boundary of the commands of two admirals. So, you see, as there is some sort of a quarrel between them, the patrol boats of one don't go into the domain of the other, and *vice versa.* If a patrol-boat thinks there is something to chase and chases it into the other zone, both admirals get after it and, so, of course, nobody goes outside his own zone any more. The admirals have their boats close at hand and good transports are torpedoed.

Well, Fourgues, who is n't an engineer, but who knows all about things on the bridge, made an awful row. He said that with a system of secret routes which the Germans learn in twenty-four hours, we might just as well give up, and that if they were determined at any price to have a particular route for transports, they should at least indicate a different one for each. As the submarines can't be everywhere at once, there is nothing to do but to have the cargo-boats widely scattered, for having only one route for all of them is the way to get the greatest number sunk. They told him to shut up,

saying that as this particular secret route had been discovered, the naval authorities would find a new one, and as it was the best method ascertained by competent persons, there was nothing for him to do but conform.

Then Fourgues said that wireless could hurt no one, cost almost nothing to install, and would at least permit those ships whose dynamos were not stopped by the first shot of shell or torpedo to call for help. They answered that all these questions were being studied, but it was not as simple as he seemed to think. After that, he asked to be given guns, one forward and one aft, so that if the Pamir were attacked by a submarine, our only recourse would not be to say our prayers and add Amen. That was where he got caught, and in first-rate fashion! For they retorted that if he did n't wish to navigate any more, he had only to say so; for they had other things to do besides putting guns on old barks like the Pamir and that the authorities were giving these problems an attention which did not need to be solicited by captains of the merchant marine.

I wish you could have seen Fourgues' face during this call-down. He went from white to brick-red.

"It's the same old story!" was what he said as we came out. "All the land-lubbers think we are afraid. Eh! What do I care about losing my carcass! But when the Pamir goes down, it will make three thousand tons the less. And not by putting

blank spaces in the newspapers can they rebuild those three thousand tons!"

As for me, I am beginning to believe that as far as the wireless and guns are concerned, Fourgues is more than right. But there has been no time to reflect on all this because the local press and the civil authorities have made the greatest imaginable fuss over the affair of the Mer-Morte and the Pamir. Old man, I've had my biography in the papers of the burg and you'd never believe what a wonderful chap I am! They interviewed me after Fourgues and Villiers, and hurrah for the heroism of our sailors, the mastery of the sea, German submarine bluff, and the efficacious protection exercised by the Allied Admiralties over our fleets! Of course, we ought n't to say so, but when they want to knock the public speechless, the censor throws all the gates wide open. In brief, they invited all three of us to a municipal banquet. The chief naval officer came with an aide-de-camp, and all the cream of society were there. We were given a grand spread. When they came to the toasts, the mayor, the captain of the port, and the president of the Chamber of Commerce got off a lot of hot air they had found in the morning papers. They know almost as much about the sea as I know about painting in oil.

But the climax came with the chief naval vegetable who spoke next to the last. During the afternoon he had treated Fourgues as though he were a cabin-boy and had refused to transmit any of the

requests Fourgues made. The same evening when the champagne came on, he poured a ton of vaseline on his head.

"I lift my glass," he said, "in honor of valiant Captain Fourgues, whose presence of mind and whose nautical science have once more proved to the Germans how vain are their pretended insults to the naval supremacy of the Allies! An accident is in no sense a defeat. I will state officially that precautions have been taken. Captain Fourgues will not again encounter a Mer-Morte!"

I was struck dumb. Fourgues replied. You know that when he wants to he can speak better than I can spit. His beard was moving and he was creasing the tablecloth with his finger-nails. I wondered what on earth he was going to serve up to the assembly, but I need n't have been anxious.

"Thank you," he said. "I am a sailor, and do not speak well except on board my ship. Thank you!"

And then he would sit down in spite of all they could do. Well, old man, it's not so bad to be an orator, for they applauded to raise the roof, the big bug most of all. After this flourish the meeting broke up.

The inhabitants had prepared a vocal and instrumental concert with the assistance of local artists, and I lit a cigar while they made me repeat for the fiftieth time the adventure of the Pamir and the Mer-Morte. Believe me, the newspapers are not

sufficient for the colonists in this country, but one must be polite and I was doing my level best, all the time leering at Fourgues, who chatted in a corner with the aide-de-camp of the naval chief, who was tapping him on the shoulder as though he were giving him some more hot air. But I could see that Fourgues was finding it pretty raw. He chewed the end of his cigar without having lit it and kept his hands in his pockets, which is a trick he has to keep himself from making too many gestures when he is mad. When the aide-de-camp left him, he came straight over to me and said: —

"Let's get out of this, or I shall explode!"

I should have preferred to stay, because all the same it's flattering to be treated like a hero; but Fourgues pulled me by the sleeve and we turned our backs on high society.

On the way back to the Pamir, he ruminated a long time, stopped once, then went on again. I followed and said not a word. Finally he let it all out: —

"Do you know what he told me, that species of fool there, with the epaulettes? He said that as I had no confidence in the patrolling of the sea and was afraid of submarines, they were going to load the Pamir with firewood for the Army of the Orient. In that way, he said, if a submarine rakes you or torpedoes you, — which is improbable, — you will float, my dear Fourgues, — you will float — because wood is lighter than water! Because wood is lighter than water, because wood is —"

I believe Fourgues repeated it fifty-one times, his arms folded, his nose in the air, he was so furious.

Once on board, he offered me a glass of old *marc* from his home to make up for the liqueurs he had made me miss, and a cigar, a Havana "secundo," which was not bad at all. And then he did n't open his mouth again, but started laying the cards to see if the Pamir would be sunk or not before the end of the year. All his attempts failed and he was n't satisfied at all. Finally he counted the cards and saw that one was missing, the nine of clubs, which he found in the card-box. So he threw them all into the air and sent me to bed.

"Only, my boy," he said, "as they are giving us two thousand cubic metres of wood to carry to keep us from sinking, do me the favor of pinching a few feet. We'll make some rafts. If they won't give me wireless or guns, it's all right. I can't buy them in a bazaar, but if a submarine sends a torpedo into our shins, I don't intend that we shall all go to feed the crabs. Do you understand?"

I answered that I understood, and went into our quarters where Villiers had just arrived from the party. He was somewhat the worse for wear as everybody had wanted to drink with him, but at bottom he's a good fellow, for he is staying on board the Pamir and I shan't have to occupy myself with the engine any more. If he had wanted, the office would have given him a little vacation after the accident, but he said that when one had had an

escape like that, there was n't anything to be afraid of and that he would be a mascot for the Pamir. The office paid all his losses promptly, — which rather astonished me, — but did n't increase his pay a cent.

Villiers has had more technical training than Muriac, who began at sixteen as a stoker on a coast-vessel and knew his engine as he knows his own pocket, without having a word of theory. Villiers went through the school of the Arts et Métiers and bores us at table with tales of the cycles of Carnot, eutropia, and the thermodynamic function. Some days Fourgues looks askance at him, not liking to have people on the boat who know more than he, on no matter what subject. But he can't say anything. Villiers, in spite of his somewhat affected manner, makes his whole shop go as it should. He told me that he arrived just in time; otherwise the steam steering-gear, the condenser, and the boiler would have been out of business. I can well believe it. As long as the machinery keeps going, I am able to boss the job. But if it begins to say no, I am certainly not the one to contradict it.

At Algiers we loaded two thousand *stères* of firewood. It is easy to stow — throw it in the hold and it arranges itself. It does n't dirty anything; you can be sure it won't break. Fourgues himself found that on the whole it was as good as coal. It was to warm the *poilus* of the army of the Orient and we were all ready to start, but at the last moment they

told us to go and complete our cargo in France and ordered us to Cette. Fourgues tried to say that we would n't be able to take much, and that the Pamir would lose eight days, during which the soldiers would be blowing on their fingers at Saloniki. But already he was not in any too good favor with the naval authorities, with his talk of guns, wireless, and so on, so they told him they had seen enough of him and to go to Cette without making any more trouble.

At Cette the fellows pulled long faces when they saw that we were only three quarters full. They gave us casks of wine on top of our firewood. It took a day to level the logs and twisted pieces. We were able to load two tiers in each hold, enough to keep the army of the Orient drunk for three days, and we got through without too much breakage — only three or four old casks which stove in while they were in the sling, and believe me, the crew howled when they saw that good wine going into the water for the benefit of the fish! Just as we were on the point of sailing, there arrived from Cette a corps of army mules which had come from the Pyrenees for the soldiers in the Orient. They were to have embarked on a boat especially arranged for them — only, the boat had been sunk two days before and there was the greatest confusion because General Sarrail was crying for mules at the top of his voice. At the very moment we were lifting anchor, a fellow from the port ran back, waving his arms to tell us

to stop. Fourgues had the ladder let down and the chap came on board and asked how many mules we could take. Old man, it was worth the price of a seat to see Fourgues' face.

"Mules, sir, mules! So the Pamir is a stable now, is she? I am full enough to vomit, sir! I have big logs and little logs and kindling. And I have two hundred casks of wine, and at the rate at which things are moving, it will be vinegar before I arrive. And I have a positive order to get under way for Saloniki at four o'clock, sir, and now you want to know how many mules I can take! Oh, as many as you wish, sir! Put them on the deck — in the smoke-stacks — down in the chain-well — up the masts, and in my cabin. Cut them in pieces and stow them in the hold and we will paste them together again at Saloniki. It's all the same to me! The sea is deep and we shan't touch bottom even if you load us with mules enough to founder us. We can pack your mules, sir, in tiers; and if they can eat coal or fire-wood, perhaps they won't be so slow when they get to Saloniki!"

I wish you might have seen the embarrassment of the citizen with the mules! He would have crawled into the compass if that had been possible. He stammered excuses — haste, extreme haste, previous ship sunk, necessity of national defense, imperative order not to come back to land until he had disposed of his mules on the Pamir. . . . When Fourgues saw that he had abused him sufficiently,

he suspended the order to get under way. At bottom he was enjoying it.

"I'll take a hundred of your mules, sir; if you will bring enough hay for a week, for I'm not going to feed them on the bread of my crew. I will give them water from the boilers. That will cure those that are constipated. Only hurry up! I don't want to mould at Cette and I intend to sail to-morrow at five o'clock. But do your mules know how to swim, sir? Because, if the Pamir is torpedoed there's no place for them in my two lifeboats. And if they are seasick, I've no orderlies to hold basins for them! . . ."

The fellow rushed off as soon as he could, and I am sure he is still asking himself what strange phenomenon it was he stumbled upon. Villiers, who came up from the engine after Fourgues gave the order not to get under way, heard the last shot. But as soon as the muleteer had turned his back, Fourgues burst out laughing and offered each of us an Algerian cigar.

"That's how we are on the Pamir, Villiers! Of course, I'll take their mules, as many as there is room for on the deck. They are needed at Saloniki. But all the same, they're a little too fresh — sending us that bird at the last moment! As for you, my boy, to-night you are going to have a wooden floor laid over the deck for all these quadrupeds. I don't intend they shall hurt their feet on the steel deck. Have it ready by to-morrow morning at six."

You see how Fourgues is. He stayed up all night

while the crew nailed those old planks that were left from our Moroccan Boches. At six o'clock everything was ready. We had made a fine floor with cross-beams underneath and with mangers along the railing. No one slept. Villiers was all right. He calculated the length of the boards at once, the number of nails, the dimensions of the surface — everything. Without him we might have wasted. If only we could have slept the next day! But the mules arrived with their hay at dawn and we went right on without stopping. Fourgues gave orders to serve wine *ad libitum*, for, he said, with a little wine you can make a Frenchman climb up to Paradise on a knotted rope.

Well, old man, in former times I have shipped horses, cattle, pigs, and asses on the Pamir, but I recommend mules if you want distraction. They have only four feet, but it seems as though they had twenty-five. When you put the girths around their bellies, they begin to sniff and fling themselves about. When you start the winches and they are hoisted into the air, they are so astounded that they don't say a word; they content themselves by dropping all their dung because of the pressure, but you can see by their sly expression and their panting breath that they are reserving themselves for later. And when they reach the deck and the girth no longer holds them, they begin to dance, to run, and to kick wherever they see a human face, and then it's far from funny. We just missed having our eyes put out a hundred times, because there were a hundred mules.

One kicked himself overboard. He knew how to swim and decamped onto land, and whatever may have been his adventures, the Pamir did not carry him along to Saloniki.

The hay came too. Fourgues had it put on top of the deck-house near the smokestack. It was as hard as wood and as dry as asbestos. We had to wet it before the mules could eat it. Two men from the crew were assigned to look after them, because there was no one appointed at Cette to escort them. I was glad it was the crew instead of me! For twenty-four hours they were unable to approach those mules without their showing their heels and skipping like kids, so that the two reservists fled with the hay! But when the beasts began to get hungry, they all held out their noses for the hay when it came, and after a few days the movie-man and the *croupier* were chums with them. As none of the rest of the crew, Villiers and I included, could approach without seeing them wriggle behind, the movie-man and the *croupier* made much of it and said that they were the only ones who knew how to treat animals.

Fourgues, coming down from the bridge one night, wanted to approach them from starboard aft, saying pretty things in the language of the Midi: —

"There, there, my little dear, *mon petit bichon* —"

That did n't go at all. Three of them sent their heels about two inches from his pipe and Fourgues stampeded faster than he would have thought he could. You can't imagine the noise that a hundred

mules can make on a steel deck, even with a wooden floor. There you have four hundred hoofs making the devil's own fireworks all night long and there's no way of getting to sleep. Things had gone pretty well as far as Sardinia, because we had calm weather with only a little breeze; but from Malta to Matapan we scooped up a wind from the northwest with a choppy swell in consequence. The hundred mules swung all together as we rolled and tossed and their stamping drowned the noise of the wind. They brayed for all they were worth. The spray stung their eyes and got in their noses and they sneezed like lost souls. Add to this the five hundred casks, loose in the hold, which went "*baloom! baloom!*" on top of the wood and you can see that we had plenty of amusement from Cette to Saloniki.

But it was all the same to me, for since Villiers has come and I have nothing more to do with the engine, I have six good hours a day in which to lounge in my cabin, playing the mandolin and reading your books. I have reached Suffren, Nelson, Villeneuve, and Trafalgar in the maritime history. Here is my conclusion. The more things change, the more it's just the same thing.

The secret route was altered on the run of the Pamir from Cette to Saloniki. Perhaps the sinking of the Mer-Morte was the cause of this. Fourgues and Villiers think so. All I know is that we did n't have one patrol-boat between Cette and Point Cassandra. You who are on a warship — can you

explain this to me? I suppose you protect the boats that are worth the trouble, although the Provence, which had more than a thousand men on board, tripped up not long ago. Evidently boats loaded with mules, wine, and firewood are not worth the trouble, and I am the first to realize that this is true. I have had rafts made of the extra wood I took and if the Pamir drinks her bock, we can hope to float. But I understand very well that no one is going to occupy himself with a water-bruiser with a crew of only thirty-five men, and if you tell me that the others are guarded, it's all right.

At Saloniki, Fourgues caught it, naturally. He was late with the wine, late with the firewood, late with the mules. It was some sort of naval captain, I'm not sure what, who came on board to tell this. If you ever see him, he is a chap with a square jaw, big and strong as an oak, who does n't chew his words any more than Fourgues. So you can imagine what they did to each other. Fortunately Fourgues was able to show his papers quite in order and the other had to take it all back. They must be in crying need of wine, mules, and wood here, for they made us come alongside the principal quay of the port on the evening of our arrival and we had given up all our cargo in three days. We were then sent to the harbor to wait for orders and are having a lazy time. It's good for us, for we've all had our share, ever since Algiers.

I must have slept twenty-four hours at one stretch

after the unloading of the Pamir, and now Fourgues, Villiers, and I go on land about three or four o'clock and come back when all the lights are out. What a dirty hole Saloniki is! There are two or three cafés, all crowded. In the streets the policing is done by Greeks, French, and English, and one is about as agreeable as the other. And there is an exchange of eighteen or twenty per cent, and Fourgues says it is shameful that the French Government permits French paper to lose a fifth on that of Greece. And then everybody says there is no use having an army of the Orient if the French quartermaster-general refuses it supplies, personnel, guns, airplanes, and everything. I could write volumes if I told what I have heard here about the fix they are in. I had rather be on the Pamir than in General Sarrail's shoes, and, from what they say, he is a sharp one to have held on here against the Boches, the Austrians, the Bulgarians, and the Turks, without counting the Greeks at his back, and with forces such that any general on the French front having as few would swear by all the gods that his line was going to be broken.

And in the mean time, old man, I am still a long way from La Rochelle, which is annoying. It does no good for you to tell me that all is going well, that everything is moving, that it will soon be over — all that does n't help with my affairs. There you are on the Auvergne, well tied up at the foot of a harbor, and I think you are quite right to be there, for there is no use needlessly exposing battleships which cost

twenty-five millions and carry twelve hundred men. Nor are your battleships much good either — and I'll tell you later what Fourgues thinks about that. At present there are only two things that count, according to my way of thinking — the Boche submarines and the ships of commerce which provision the Allies. All the rest amounts to absolutely nothing at all. Only, the Allied admirals are neither on the German submarines nor on the ships of commerce. Well, then, they are gargling their throats with code-telegrams while the little boats that put to sea are being torpedoed. But Fourgues' cards say that the Pamir won't be torpedoed this year. As the war ought to be over before 1917, the rest is unimportant.

Good-bye, old pal. Send me your photograph as ensign and don't have a disdainful air when it's taken. We are putting at least as much into this on the Pamir as on the Auvergne, where I send you a good hearty handshake.

Bilbao, April 27, 1916

DEAR OLD MAN, —

We are here to get iron. You know it's good in this country, and we have n't any left in France. But I will start again at Saloniki where I left off.

They had no idea what to do with the Pamir down there. We should be there yet if Fourgues had not irritated all the big aces of the navy so that they told him at last to get out by all means and go to Malta, where there might be something for us to do.

We left in ballast, nothing in the hold and a few passengers, young fellows from nineteen to twenty-five years of age who were leaving Saloniki to finish their higher education in Spain, Switzerland, or Holland.

All these young people were very pro-French and Venizelist, and Fourgues was astonished at their going away from Saloniki to study elsewhere than in France, especially as they said with the grandest gestures that the hour of Venizelos was about to ring and that he would at last espouse the cause of the great and generous nation which — who — of whom — and *patati* and *patata* — and that they should form an army in Greece to fight at our side and that Greece would come into her own.

Fourgues chatted with them in order to pump them and after a while he understood.

"You see," he said, "these tender hearts are skipping out of Saloniki because they are afraid they will be obliged to enlist if Venizelos makes up an army. They are, as we say, brave, but not rash! They don't go into French territory because they think they might be called back, whereas in a neutral country they will be perfectly safe. I don't know whether the ancient Greeks were as brave as the historians say, but those of to-day look to me like heroes, in the sense that they love to see a good fight."

During the trip from Saloniki to Malta we actually met some patrol-boats off the coast by Matapan; the rest of the time — nothing at all! I wonder why there

are people who ask what good it does for us to be at Saloniki. Such idiots ought to go down there and see how, if we had no one there to keep Constantine's mouth shut, Sophie's husband would have handed his country over to the Boches long since and offered all his ports to their submarines.

And that would be a nice fix! Now that the submarines are already hard at it, — no matter what people say, — you can see what it would be like if they could utilize the Greek ports and islands. There would no longer be any way of getting through down there; the route to Egypt and India would be cut off and we might as well give the Boches all that side of the map.

At Malta we arrived like a fish in Lent, and as the English don't like to have their ports too crowded, they told the French Mission to get the Pamir out of the way at once. As no one knew what to do with us, they sent us to Bizerta where they said that perhaps we might find orders. We left after one night in port, still empty, but it's the Princess who will pay the bill. There was one passenger who arrived with a valise at the last minute and begged us to take her along. She was the wife of an ensign in the navy, and as he had been with his ship, she had not seen him since August, 1914. Talk about adventures — I'll tell you one!

Ever since the beginning of the war the cruiser of the little lady's husband had rolled around, to Syria, Egypt, in the Indian Ocean, and other places, and

she had remained with her family in a village in the Juras where she suffered death and damnation thinking of her husband here, there, and everywhere. She is the daughter of a ship inspector, but about as much at home in navigation as I am in theology; on a boat she is like a chicken that has just found a knife. Every mail her husband wrote her to wait, that his cruiser would come nearer to France some day, and then he would let her know. The first of March she received a telegram from Port Said: "Sailing ten days Malta repairs Come immediately."

She received this in her mountains one hour before the train left which connected with the express for Marseilles. Taking just time to pack a valise, she started and reached Marseilles the next day, believing that it was only necessary to arrive on the quay in order to take the first boat, as in Jules Verne. All day long she was juggled from the Cannebière to the National Port, asking everybody, customs officers, police, sailors, etc., where one took the boat for Malta. Finally her cabman saw that she was not making any progress, so he took her to naval headquarters. She says she can't tell an admiral from a station-master because their uniforms are so much alike; so you can see how they must have laughed at headquarters when she said that she wanted to see her husband at Malta and that was all there was about it. In short, they explained to her that the packet had left the evening before, and there would not be another for a week, so that she could not

reach Malta for ten or eleven days. The little lady was beside herself. A man, you or I, would have said, Oh, *hell!* But I believe if a woman got it into her head to see her husband she would go all the way on her elbows rather than give up. She took the train for Italy and made the entire circuit, Nice, Genoa, Rome, Naples, Reggio, the Strait, Messina, and Syracuse — three days and a half without stopping and third-class because she was afraid her money would give out. She herself does not remember how she was able to disentangle everything in order to have the passports and that sort of thing. All she remembers is that she showed all the authorities her marriage certificate and her husband's telegram. They tried everywhere to stop her. Then she would start explaining and crying and it would end by her being permitted to go on. Add to this that she can't even say bread in Italian! She ate as she could, afraid to get out of the train in a station for fear it would go off and leave her. It made no difference, she did n't give up and she reached Syracuse. The packet was not going to leave for two days and she did n't have money enough for the passage. At the French Consulate they sent her away because she was neither indigent nor anything else, nor was she in the service. They told her to write home for money as the telegraphic money-orders no longer exist; but writing would have taken a week or more.

Only a woman could get herself out of such a situation. High and dry in Sicily without a cent, unable

to get anything from her husband or from home, and nevertheless to arrive in Malta — it's a mystery to you and me who are, nevertheless, old foxes at travelling. She pawned her gold watch and a ring with a stone; then she found out in some way that there was a sailing-vessel carrying cork and sulphur which would sail for Malta the next day. By this means she made a day, as the packet stops at all the ports and the sailboat went straight across without putting in.

I should like to know what she did to make the old Sicilian captain of the vessel take her. She put it over! Of course, she is quite pretty, about as big as a pat of butter and she does n't keep her eyes in her pocket. She thinks and talks of nothing but her husband, but in order to get to him she knows very well how to smile and jolly people along. She says that with the Sicilian captain she had only to show her heart and the word "Malta" in the telegram and that that finished him! Well, I should like to have seen it.

At Malta she took a small boat in order to make a tour of the port. She had never seen her husband's cruiser and all that she knew of it was that it had three smokestacks, two masts, and a stem *en éperon.* She was sure of this much from the poor photograph she carried. So she pointed out to the boatman all the ships with three smokestacks and he went up to them. As the names are painted out since the war, she asked everywhere, "Is this the cruiser Bayard?"

Then some one would explain that the Bayard was not at Malta; but she was afraid they were fooling her and kept on searching. Finally she was forced to see that the Bayard was not there. She was told that it had left three days before, but that in time of war no one knew where a ship went and that only the admiral could tell her — if he happened to be in a good humor that day; unfortunately he was more apt to be abusive. That did n't matter; she asked where she might see the admiral! They laughed in her face, and told her that this admiral was a bachelor and nothing enraged him more than to have his officers see their wives, because he said that wartime was not like peace. Finally she had the name of the admiral's ship. Well, I should like to have seen the collision between the lady and the admiral!

She tells merely that he asked her if she was crazy, and said that her husband had done very wrong to telegraph his whereabouts and that he was going to give strict orders that such a thing must not occur again; that there was nothing for her to do but make for France at once; that it was useless to chase after her husband upon the vast ocean when the war would perhaps be over before she had caught up with him.

Fortunately, on leaving the ship, broken-hearted, she ran into an officer to whom she said: "And you, monsieur, will you not tell me where the Bayard is?" The officer, a translator of dispatches, was a friend of her husband and happened to know. He took her to his stateroom in order that no one should

hear them, and under seal of secrecy told her that the Bayard was at Bizerta for repairs. It would remain there eight or ten days and she could join it if there was a boat. All the regular service has stopped. There is nothing now but military ships or ships that have been taken into military service and which must not take passengers. On these she could not go except by fraud and with serious risk, if, indeed, any one would take her. But she said that no one could shoot her for that, and if they dragged her husband into it just because she went to look for him, she would make him hand in his resignation after the war and that was all there was about it! She does n't lose her bearings, this little lady! She had never seen the young officer, the dispatch translator, but she simply annexed him. She borrowed a hundred francs from him at once in the name of her husband, and then she told him to inform her immediately of any boat, no matter what, that was leaving for Tunis. But the officer was obdurate, for he said if the admiral found it out, he would put him under arrest without hesitation. The little lady must have sent him one of her coy glances, for he gave in. And then she told him that she would install herself with her valise on a bench in the custom-office for the night, so that the ensign would n't have to run to a hotel, and so that she would be ready to jump into the first boat he pointed out to her.

In spite of his advice she did as she said and es-

tablished herself in the custom-house. The officers wanted to put her out, but she nailed herself to a bench with her valise, and as she did n't look like a conspirator, they left her there and she slept with her head against the wall. In the morning one of the sergeants went to get her some tea and toast and she made her toilet in the office of the customs men, as though she were at home. Just at this moment the ensign of the admiral's ship came to tell her that the Pamir, having arrived the evening before, was to sail at eight that morning for Bizerta, but that the commander of the Pamir was known for his disagreeable character and that he would send her away promptly. *Ah, ouiche!* Ten minutes afterwards, while we were lifting anchor, she climbed our ladder, which was still down, bounded onto the bridge as though she had never done anything else all her life, and went straight up to Fourgues, for all the world like Jeanne d'Arc before the Dauphin. Fourgues made a face, and while she got off her little speech, assumed the expression he wears before a head wind. That would have been enough to silence me, but she went on and on! She begged, she smiled, and finally, as Fourgues kept on saying nothing and examining her from top to toe, — but I could see his hands fidgeting behind his back as they do when he is enjoying himself, — she burst into sobs, sat down on her valise, patted her eyes with a handkerchief the size of a nut, and kept saying over and over: —

"How unhappy I am! Oh, how unhappy I am!"

Well, Fourgues took off his cap, went over to her, lifted her by the chin like a good papa, and said: —

"So it's true, little girl, all this stuff that you have been telling me? *Eh bien!* You're in luck — there's an empty cabin! Go and wash your face! I don't want that fortunate husband of yours to see you ill!"

Old man, she fell on his neck and hugged him! Fourgues let her do it and returned the favor. And then, tapping her on the cheek: —

"It's all right, little girl! I have a daughter of your age, and I only hope she'll do half as much when she is married. And now, go and make yourself pretty and you can tell us all about it at luncheon — twelve sharp."

Well, old man, we had the most charming trip — lady's weather, bright sunlight, and that little woman radiating happiness from her hair to her heels. Her little valise was a malicious thing; out of it she pulled ribbons, bits of lace, and all sorts of pretty things, and when she came out of Blangy's cabin at noon, you would never have believed it was the same person who had arrived in the morning with her hair coming down, wearing a crumpled duster. How we laughed at table when she told us her misadventures! Fourgues could hardly contain himself for joy.

She stayed on the bridge all the afternoon and I explained everything to her — the compass, the

charts, the signal lights, the navigation, and what-not. She could n't have understood a thing, but she smiled and nodded her head. If I had spoken Chinese to her, she would still have smiled and danced up and down. That night at dinner, Fourgues seized the occasion to give Villiers and me a discourse on the heart, in order to encourage us to marry soon. Can't you just hear him? All the strings of the lyre! As far as I am concerned I did n't need so much — I'm only waiting for the chance. But Villiers tried to be smart and offered *buts*, *ifs*, and *fors*. And then the little lady took a hand and did him up in five seconds, and Villiers ended by confessing himself beaten and begging her to find him some one who resembled her as closely as possible. And so we were all comfortable and happy. She went to bed and slept a full fourteen hours. When the Pamir reached Bizerta, about ten o'clock in the morning, she came out of her cabin as fresh as a rose, and *bon Dieu de bois*, her ensign of a husband must find that pleasanter nights than the hard wind in his face! It happened that the Pamir was sent to Sidi-Abdallah, right where the Bayard was in dry-dock, and that we anchored close to land.

"There is your ship, little girl," said Fourgues, "and your husband is on it. Greet him for me if you think of it. And be assured nothing will happen to him. With a little wife like you he is fixed!"

She trotted off without waiting for anything more, — fairly dancing, — only just a good-bye from her

finger-tips — except that she gave Fourgues another hug.

You must forgive me for having told you all this. But you see on the Pamir we have so few distractions and it was worth more than all the stupidities of ports and the rambling around at sea. It's superfluous to say that that little woman had nerve! If everybody had as much the war would last six months the less.

We had no time to find out what happened to her, for the Pamir was immediately packed off to Bilbao, — still empty, — which means that the Government will have paid the owners a voyage from Saloniki to Bilbao gratis. But that's no affair of ours, is it? We sail, we execute orders — even when there are n't any!

So we stopped at Sidi-Abdallah two days, just time enough to provision, and started for Bilbao, where the Pamir was to get iron ore. The voyage seemed rather dismal to all of us after the passage from Malta, and we spent the time going over what she had told us. Fourgues says it is stupid to prohibit the officers and sailors from telegraphing where they are going. If it's because there is danger of leaks in the telegraph-offices, they have only to employ people who are above suspicion, mobilize them, and bind them to secrecy; whereas, especially on the foreign lines, they still keep many who come from no one knows where and among whom there are evidently spies. But the naval authorities, in-

stead of getting rid of those who don't give a hang and are in a position to let things out, prefer to imprison the sailors — who suffer dreadfully — because the sailors can't move and can be punished if they make any objection. That was the first point.

Afterwards he said that it was pretty tough that in the navy no one gets regular leave such as they have in the army, and that it's a good way to make the sailors grumble. And then, what advantage is there in repairing boats at Bizerta, where there is almost nothing in the way of a plant and no parts for refitting, instead of sending them to Toulon? The route from Bizerta is almost the same as that from the Orient and there's no saving of coal, while all the material for repairs and refitting must be sent to Bizerta, as well as coal and everything else, necessitating the employment of a lot of boats which cost the eyes out of your head like the Pamir, and making delays of loading at Toulon and unloading at Bizerta. Whereas, if the battleships and cruisers went to Toulon, everything would be on a practical basis and at the end of railroad and telegraph lines. What with one thing and another, this little establishment must have cost some hundreds of millions without a single battleship having gained a day, while not a little material will have been sunk by submarines.

Speaking of submarines, we wish you would tell us how long they are going to keep up that farce of

having the big ships sail in broad daylight on pretended secret routes which all the Germans know. Let them send the Pamir and others of her class out to be sunk — that will still pass — because officially, of course, there is nothing to be feared from the submarine warfare; but battleships or cruisers which cost fifty and sixty millions with a thousand men on board — Fourgues thinks that's a little too much. I give him the floor.

"It's all very pretty," he says, "to pretend that the German submarines are a joke. But it would be better to take common-sense precautions. I'm not a submarine officer, but I have seen several such officers, and they say that at night they can't see anything in their periscopes and are obliged to navigate on the surface. Consequently they are much less dangerous at night. So there's nothing to do but have the big war-vessels sail at night and hug the coast in the daytime, or better, anchor in port, especially in the Mediterranean, where there is no lack of coast or ports. The voyages would take a little longer, but that's worth as much as fifty millions and a thousand men sent to the bottom. It's like the transporting of troops and material. At first, I did n't understand why they made them start from Marseilles for Saloniki, instead of from Taranto or Brindisi, the Italians being our allies. That would make three or four days less on the water, that much less risk, and not a few millions saved. But if at any price they must go by sea,

it's a mystery to me why they don't sail by day quite near the Italian, African, or Greek coasts. In the first place, there is less danger of being torpedoed, for the coasts are easier to patrol; and then, in case of torpedoing, there would frequently be time to run ashore and the ship might be saved and the lifeboats might not be lost either. It's all childishly simple, but it would take the Devil himself to make the responsible people understand that war is not peace. When it comes to insulting folks, the big vegetables know well enough how to say that 'war is war!' but in place of taking measures they prefer to spit out paper and paper and still more paper! This submarine business is going to cost them dear. But, you know, my children, when the ships begin to drop like skittles, they'll shriek and say that the Boches are pirates; that everything had been done, but no one knew they were as wicked as all that! Because the public and the deputies are in total ignorance, the vegetables will be pitied and will anoint themselves great men — while the boats keep on going down. After a year we'll be in a nice fix, without mentioning how the country will have to tighten its belt because there will be no way of feeding it — steel and everything else short. Then the public will make some music, but no one will really know how it came about and the censor will keep on strangling all those like you and me who see what ought to be done; so the submarines will clean us out completely."

When he once starts in, Fourgues has a heavy hand. But Villiers thinks he is right and so do I, and sometimes we wonder if all these people have n't lost their wits. Well, who lives will learn and we can die but once. If the Pamir goes down and we drink our cup, at least we know whose fault it is.

We reached Bilbao pretty well shaken up from having travelled empty. Going up the coast of Portugal, we ran into fearful weather. I will pass over all the horrid row Fourgues had finding out where and how to get his ore. It looks as though the emissaries France has here pass their time playing bridge instead of looking after their business. They must send down fellows who are well ambushed and prefer to feel of good money at a safe distance from the front, but who can look after transports and provisioning about as well as I can play the organ. And you should see how preoccupied they are with the Germans and with all the Germans do down here. You might as well call the Boches the masters! They know everything, see everything that sails, and inform their ambassador at Madrid, who must direct at least fifty thousand Boches with a nod of his head. There are spies everywhere, but we have n't any anywhere. Good lord, it's lucky for us that Germany's position in relation to the sea is what it is — in a sort of blind alley! Only to see how she has succeeded in making fools of us on the sea, at arm's length, as it were, one can be certain that if we were in her place and she in ours, we should have

been wiped out long since and should n't be getting so much as a gramme of merchandise from outside.

All around, down here, there are wireless stations and spy stations on the coast to inform the Boche submarines. They have only to listen and then go straight ahead. Neither Fourgues nor any one else on board understands the tales about stores of oil which the Germans, according to French papers, are keeping in neutral countries. They say that the Boches have supply-bases in Greece, Spain, and elsewhere, and that without these they could not work as they do. That's all sheer mystification. Every time any one looks for these bases they are n't to be found — because there are n't any. The Boches carry as much as fifteen or twenty days' supply in their submarines. People told us that in Bilbao, as they did in Norway last year. Well, then, will you tell me where they would need to get more? From Zeebrugge to the Mediterranean does n't take twenty days, and in the Mediterranean they have Pola and Cattaro, the Bulgarian coast and Constantinople, Syria, the points of Tripoli which have been retaken by the Turks, and those parts of Morocco that we have n't got. No matter what they do, they are never more than three or four days from a friendly base, so they don't need to go to the neutrals. We look like idiots, accusing the neutrals of things of which they are n't guilty and which can't be proved, when there are so many worse that we don't dare mention. All this would

be a joke if it did n't prolong the war, but it will end by costing us dear.

Well, this time the Pamir does n't sail empty — she has three thousand tons of good ore which the Boches won't get. We don't know yet where we are going, but we shall hardly leave before a week, the loading is so slow.

Upon which, old man, shake hands! I wish we were going to Bordeaux because at Bordeaux there's a train for La Rochelle. Good-bye.

PART FOUR

Baltimore, U.S.A., July 16, 1916

My dear Old Pal, —

Is n't it absurd that with two years' interval I am again passing the 14th of July in the United States? Only, this time you are n't here and there's not the slightest chance of our running into each other. I wonder if I should find you changed after all this time! Perhaps I should n't know you any more now that you have shaved off your moustache in order to be like all your friends — which is a pose, old man, but it won't go down with me! Nor am I the skinny little chap you used to knock around to see if I could keep on my keel. I have the beard of a missionary and my fiancée says that I have more force and that now I look like a man. So much for the physical. As for the rest, it's even worse. You can well believe that two years of hard labor like what we have on the Pamir — and all that we have seen and all that we have heard — such things steady the head. At La Rochelle they listened to me as to an oracle, even the old people, which is quite different from what it was two years ago. *Dame*, only hear him! He has pondered a little, he has his little ideas! Before, I was just happy-go-lucky, I did n't give a hang, I found everything perfectly simple as long as I had something to eat and my feet high and dry on

the bridge if we were getting heavy seas. Now I see more clearly the whys and the hows. I find it's more complicated, and there are even times when I think I might be quite embarrassed if I had to give the orders for the war. It's age coming — maturity, as they call it. And so, alas, I am aware that the more it keeps on coming, the more things will multiply and embellish themselves until, if I ever have any real responsibilities, I shall be much too ancient and all tangled up in a lot of considerations which will hinder me from acting. After two years of war, there is one conclusion of which I am sure: All the chiefs and manitous are too old, and what disgusts me is that there's a chance I should do the same as they. Every one is n't Fourgues, who will soon be fifty, and who can decide in five seconds because he is willing to take responsibility. But for one like that there are a hundred ciphers, and the country is suffering from it.

You will wonder if I am having the blues because I tell you this nonsense instead of the history of the Pamir, which, you say, amuses you. The 14th of July far from France, without a chum with whom to chin — it gives me regular blue devils. Fourgues and Villiers — who are ever so kind — tried to distract me at a music-hall in Baltimore, but I was bored. And then, hang it all — But I won't go on. Let's get back to the subject.

I was able to get to La Rochelle. We sent you a card, my fiancée and I. After two weeks at Bilbao,

the Pamir was sent to Boucau to unload her ore. That's a nasty harbor where you roll from side to side with no swell at all and where the bottom is bad. Seeing that we should be long in unloading, as there were no facilities, Fourgues let me light out for La Rochelle and I did n't stop to ask for details. I was perfectly satisfied that trains go fast, though I did wonder how long they were going to keep up this levity of burning coal for people on pleasure-trips instead of saving it for the soldiers and the armies. When I said that, I was told that the country would rebel if there were restrictions. That is stupid reasoning, and they will have to come to it anyway, and then the Government will seem to have been forced and not to have foreseen anything; whereas, if they had begun at once, no one would be astonished. There have been other surprises since the war began and the country has shoulders sufficiently solid to bear the truth. Only, it's the order to say that everything is all right and that we shall never be obliged to do as the Boches. At home I saw a lot of friends who told me about stories appearing in the censored papers, saying that things are going well and that we have all we need and that it is an affair of only three or four months. Where do all those stories come from? . . . . . .

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. . . They have only to come out and they can see for themselves. It's like the Boche sub-

marines. On that subject, old man, we of the sea have only to keep our mouths shut. Everybody knows more about that than we. During the first two or three days that I was at home, I said what I thought, but after a while I stopped because they demonstrated to me by *a* plus *b* that the submarines were a joke. All the stories I told of the sea, of my voyages and what I had seen, they listened to attentively and it was flattering. Even the story of the Mer-Morte was considered very interesting. Really, it was for all the world like *concierges* reading a novel and gloating over the sensational details! But when I said that the Provence, the Ville-de-la-Ciotat, the Lusitania, and the rest were only the prologue, they called me a pessimist, and told me that a lot of submarines had been sunk and that it was official that there were n't any more, and that as only a thousandth of the traffic had been lost, anyway, these ships did n't count. The stupidest part of it was that I was obliged to say the same to my fiancée or she would have been worried to death. She made me swear to be careful and to keep my life-belt on all the time. I swore. When she cries I don't know what in the world to do. I did n't tell her that the Pamir has neither wireless nor guns and is n't likely to have them, and that if we run into a submarine all we can do is to blow on it to see if it will sneeze. As I stayed only five days the papers were not ready and we could n't be married. We have decided that it will come off next time even if I get only forty-eight hours' leave.

I had put aside fifteen hundred francs, which I gave to her, and she will arrange everything, furniture and outfit, to install us in a little house two or three hundred yards from her parents. Well, old man, though it was hard to say good-bye at the station, we shall be married before the year is up, I hope. Fourgues told me that I could count on eight days, but the unloading went fast at Boucau because of the return of fine weather and I received a telegram the fifth day, ordering me to report at Saint-Nazaire in a hurry. The Pamir was to stop there in two days and would probably sail for America. I was rather astonished at the destination because the Pamir has the habit now of rolling around Europe; but of course sailors must be ready for anything.

Marguerite stuffed my valise full of preserves and made a big package of collars and handkerchiefs, socks and shirts. She embroidered lovely initials on all of them and added some little silk pocket-handkerchiefs, some colored suspenders, and the proper thing in neckties. I'm a regular swell, old man. Villiers, who puts in all his spare time at the haberdashers' collecting multicolored *lingerie*, is dying of envy.

I could n't find anybody at Saint-Nazaire; only a letter at the company's agency, in which Fourgues told me to report at Boulogne, the Pamir having been sent there, and that he would look for me the following Sunday. You can imagine how stupid I felt to have run away from La Rochelle without having had

time to draw a long breath — and all the more so as it only made forty hours' wait, not long enough for me to go back. So I stopped a day in Paris. A *gendarme* arrested me in the station at Nantes and another in the subway in Paris, to find out about my military status. I was in civilian dress. If I had only known, I should have made the entire trip in the company's uniform, for every one in France looks at you askance and says disagreeable things if you have n't a military appearance.

I found the Pamir at Boulogne in the Loubet dock, taking on a cargo of old English material from the French front: wagons, guns, automobiles, hangars, and old iron, to be repaired in England. Fourgues explained that the Pamir should have gone to America to get steel bars for the manufacture of shells in France, but as that order would n't be ready for a month, they had seized the opportunity to have us potter around a little in the English Channel. As pottering it was rather important work, seeing that we made two trips each way and that both times in England we took on from two hundred to two hundred and fifty brand-new automobiles and motor-truck chassis for the Flanders front. The English are beginning to get under way seriously. They have taken time, but it's not the same now as it was when we were there during the first year of the war. I don't know how long it's going to take them to train their new army and to make soldiers and officers, but as far as the material goes, there's no

question. You have no idea of the traffic between England and France. It is coming into all the ports — Calais, Boulogne, Fécamp, Le Tréport, Dieppe, Le Havre, Rouen, Caen — without counting the little ones. They are all crowded. Barely arrived in England, the Pamir is tied to a dock and they pull out her junk and stuff in some more. It still takes longer in France, although that, too, is a little better now than last year. Oh, it's not ideal yet, and one often wonders what all the empty boats and cars are doing. In four or five years, maybe the officials and the bureaucrats will look at their watches instead of piling up papers.

At last we got off for Baltimore with some dozens of cases of French exports — fabrics, Parisian articles — nothing much. When I think that the Germans continue to send their catalogues and merchandise over the whole world by way of the neutrals, and that the three-thousand-ton Pamir was sent out with scarcely two or three hundred tons of cheap stuff, it seems hardly worth while to talk in the papers about economizing. This little Atlantic trip will have cost the Princess some twenty-five thousand francs, a part of which she ought to have gotten back. And it's like that everywhere. They can get ready for a new loan, but Fourgues says it's saving the centimes and throwing the billions overboard.

Villiers and Fourgues have spent their time during the voyage rowing at table, arguing about all that has

happened during the last two or three months: the Irish rebellion, the retreat in Mesopotamia, the Jutland affair, and the death of Kitchener — without counting affairs at home . . . . . .

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. . . At first Fourgues was a little overbearing toward Villiers because he believed Villiers contradicted him just to see him go up in the air, and two or three times he told Villiers that that was enough, there was no need of going on in that tone. But this was in the Mediterranean when Villiers first came on board with his neckties and his white hands. Now that he has put the engine in order with a turn of the wrist, and now that everything is going on rollers, Fourgues knows that he can't be treated that way because it's *chic* to have an officer on whom one can depend. So he asks Villiers' advice on a lot of technical matters. But when it comes to their grand discussions of naval questions and the politics of the war, they jostle each other like rag-pickers. At bottom they have the same opinions and I am beginning to believe that they wrangle for amusement. Villiers has a little manner of arguing in a calm voice, as though he were afraid of disarranging his collar or the part of his hair. Fourgues tries to keep on the same level and says: —

"*Eh bien*, Villiers, let's talk calmly. We're not of the same opinion but it will do this boy good to hear your arguments."

The "boy" is I! Ever since Villiers arrived, Fourgues has shoved me into a drawer because I have n't the cheek to get up against Villiers. And also at present Fourgues has a grudge against me for not having been married at La Rochelle. He says that I am a laggard and that the next time he will go to La Rochelle with me and march me straight to the mayor's from the train. If that will get me back sooner, I won't ask for anything better!

So, then, I listen without being obliged to take part. When Villiers is optimistic, Fourgues says that everything is going to the dogs. When Villiers is pessimistic, Fourgues says that the Allies have n't made a single mistake and that as the Boches have n't got us yet, we have hold of things in the proper way and are going to wade right into them. Only, he says all this with a roar because he can't hold out more than five minutes in the face of Villiers' impassibility.

I believe they have discussed the Jutland affair at every meal, trying to find out who was beaten, what the results were, etc. Villiers is friendly with a lot of engineer officers, who, like himself, passed through the *Arts-et-Métiers* and he is also accustomed to dealing with figures and is very exact. He says that affairs like that of Jutland make a noise in the newspapers and in speeches, but that at bottom they are of absolutely no use whatsoever. Fourgues is for hitting at the Germans every time there is a chance, and he says that if the English had been able

to demolish the entire German fleet the war would be well along. Villiers maintains that this is not true at all, that even if the big German ships were at the bottom, their coasts would still be just as well defended by guns, mines, submarines, and Zeppelins, and that the English could not get any nearer than now; he also says that if the Germans had lost all their big ships, under-sea warfare would not be changed one iota and that the submarines would give us just as much trouble. Battleships, he says, are as much ancient history as muzzle-loading cannon; in the future there won't be anything but submarines, mines, and light boats to carry on the real work, as this war has demonstrated. . . . . .

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Although this is somewhat Fourgues' opinion, as I know, he replies — just to be obstinate — that as long as one side builds big ships, the other is obliged to. But Villiers is not downed. He asks by what means the Gambetta, the Ocean, the Cressy, the Hogue, the Aboukir, the Bouvet, the Hampshire, and all the other big ships were sunk? Not by great vessels, but by torpedoes which cost twenty thousand francs at most, but which can send battleships costing fifty millions and more to the bottom. So if for each ship worth fifty millions, twenty-five submarine torpedo-boats or mine-layers were built, the Allies would have a thousand, perhaps, and the Germans, with all the dreadnoughts in the world,

would not dare put their noses out of doors. But inversely, if the Germans had five hundred or a thousand submarines instead of big ships, they would make life impossible at sea. As they are not people who keep on going in the wrong direction, they have quickly seen that submarines and mines are the maritime weapons and are going to turn them out like little pies. Fourgues repeated this conversation to me so often that I knew Villiers had shut him up completely, but he wanted to quibble, so one evening Villiers said to him: "To-morrow I'm going to bring you an estimate of the cost of the battle of Jutland according to official accounts in England at the time we left, and you will see if it's worth while to build big ships."

He came to luncheon next day with his *topo* and Fourgues took it all back. Villiers gave me permission to make a copy to send you. He brought all the figures up to date with the latest information received in America and you simply can't get out of it — it's statistics. The *topo* follows. I shall copy it for you just as he has it arranged: —

COST OF THE BATTLE OF JUTLAND

The sum-total of the money lost in the battle of Jutland can be divided into five parts: —

1. English and German ships sunk;
2. Repairs of damaged ships;
3. Cost of artillery;
4. Cost of coal and extras;
5. Capital represented by the men drowned and the pensions paid to their dependents.

I. Sunken Ships

German

	francs
Derfflinger	60 million
Lützow	60 "
Kaiser	60 "
Hindenburg	60 "
Pommern	30 "
Elbing	10 "
Wiesbaden	10 "
Rostock	10 "
Frauenlob	6 "
Nine destroyers (in all) about	27 "
One submarine	2 "
German total	335 million

English

Invincible	50 million
Indefatigable	50 "
Queen Mary	60 "
Black Prince	30 "
Warrior	30 "
Defence	35 "
Eight light vessels (in all) about	25 "
English total	280 million
Total of all ships sunk	615 million

II. Repairs of Damaged Ships

The number of ships damaged is much superior to that of ships destroyed. Some are certainly no longer available and represent a dead loss. It is impossible to determine the cost of the repair of the others, but one cannot be far from the truth in estimating under this head almost a third of what comes under the head of total destruction, or about 200 million, which, added to the first total, makes about 800 million.

III. Cost of Artillery

There were about fifty big ships engaged in the battle, armed with guns of 305, 340, or 380, in varying numbers. Admitting the average number per ship to be ten guns

firing two shots a minute at an average rate of 3000 francs a shot, we have: $50 \times 10 \times 2 \times 3000 = 3$ million francs a minute. Summing up the minutes of firing and admitting 45 as the total, we have $3 \times 45 = 135$ million francs. Adding the fire of the secondary batteries, and guns which burst or which must be changed, the total for the artillery can be given as about 150 million, which, added to the others, makes 950 million.

IV. Cost of Coal and Extras

A big ship going at top speed burns about 1000 tons a day at 50 francs a ton (if not more), making 50,000 francs a day. Admitting the total of the operations at top speed and with active fires to have lasted at least one day, put down two and a half million for the big ships alone. Adding the coal for the smaller boats will bring it up to three million. The wear and tear of boilers, dynamos, and other machinery, belonging to the damages of the battle, would make this mount up to 20 million, which, added to the preceding 950 and rounding it out with things not accounted for, would constitute a total of about one billion for the material alone.

V. Capital Represented by the Personnel

Certain ships had only one or a few men saved. The total number of dead certainly exceeds 10,000 men. There were also many wounded, some definitively, others only partly crippled. Admitting a total of 20,000 persons for whom the State must pay pensions, either to them or to their dependants, and taking an average of 10,000 francs for the annual pension, we reach 20 millions of annual arrears at five per cent, representing an immobilized capital of 400 million francs. It is impossible to appreciate the intrinsic value represented by these 10,000 killed and 10,000 wounded, all taken from among the most fit of both nations, nor the ruin brought by their death to their families. But it is not far from the truth to put 500 million as the total of the human loss, which, added to the preceding billion, makes the cost of the few hours of the battle of Jutland about 1 billion 500 million francs.

So there you have Villiers' *topo*. As to its form, Fourgues wished to quibble over every article, but

Villiers was firm because he had made his calculations according to some technical reviews he got in France and England and he said the actual figures would be more. Ships always cost more than is officially stated and in time of war, coal, shells, and the rest go up from week to week, and, he said, it was very nice of him to have taken 5 per cent instead of 9 per cent for the pensions.

"Moreover, captain, it's not a question of wrangling over a hundred millions more or less. Take any sum between one and two billions. Do you mean to tell me that it advanced the war so much as a quarter of a second?"

"But if they could have overwhelmed the Boches and made a mess of their fleet —"

"That would have cost three or four or five billions because the English would have lost as well, and what then?"

"Then the English would only have to go back to port and warm their feet instead of being on the *qui-vive* all the time, leading a dog's life on account of the big German ships."

"That's just what I wanted to make you say, captain. I give you every advantage. I admit that the German fleet would be destroyed. But would that diminish by one the number of their submarines? Would their mines, batteries, or torpedoes hinder us any the less from approaching their coast? Should we have one more merchant vessel on the sea or one less sunk?"

"Yes, yes; but as long as they have big ships we have to have others to match."

"I don't agree with you. It would be sufficient for us to have hundreds of submarines in order to keep them from getting out and to hunt them down, as they do us."

"But then their battleships would sink our cargoes."

"Where have you seen battleships carrying on a warfare of pursuit? They are too delicate: they can't take coal enough to keep at sea for long. Only light boats or submarines can war on traffic."

"Well, what are you aiming at?"

"This: that the big ships are of no use any more except to spend billions in a few hours without any one being the better or the worse. That seems clear to me. Whereas a good submarine costing two million francs would carry six or eight torpedoes, would have guns, and could sink her eight or ten cargoes a month if lucky. Even if the submarine is lost, something has been accomplished if twenty or thirty thousand tons of wheat, coal, steel, or rubber are at the bottom. That's what would annoy the enemy! It would make less noise in the newspapers, but it's the real work of the war. In this war the victory will be to the one who can do the most damage to the other in the shortest time. It's always like that and why have n't we seen it this time?"

I shall never finish telling you their palavers on this subject. There is something in it — the question is

worth discussing. I should be much pleased if you would fabricate an article for me on your way of thinking. Maybe you, who are on a dreadnought, think it rather raw of me to write you things vilifying your side; but there does n't have to be any pretence between us two. Honestly, I expect an answer.

Naples, September 23

DEAR OLD MAN, —

Since my last the Pamir has made Baltimore, New York, Brest, Cardiff, Genoa, and Naples. We have n't lost any time, you see. We almost went back to America to carry steel and shells again, but at the last moment we were designated for the provisioning of Italy. So here we are under Vesuvius, and there's nothing left for us now but to die, as the saying is. But I am not anxious to do that, for Fourgues has just written a strong letter to the company saying that the Pamir has needed to go into drydock ever since she has been knocking about, and now all the more so, as we hit something hard off the coast of England and he wants to know what happened. We get water in the hold to the tune of about a foot a day and have to keep pumping all the time. I hope we are going back to France to be careened. As that will take eight or ten days, Fourgues has promised that I shall be free for the mayor and the church. So there's something good. We did n't take our steel from Baltimore after all. It had n't arrived. Just rely on the Boches to get up strikes in factories, ac-

cidents on railroads, and cars gone astray! Anyway, Fourgues learned, knocking around here and there, — but not from the consular authorities, — that, although there was no steel for us at Baltimore, there was heaps of it in New York rusting on the docks, waiting for some one to take it. So he picked up and went and the Pamir anchored near Brooklyn Bridge and we took in three thousand tons of steel and some extra piled on the deck. Of course, Fourgues did n't go at it with the back of the spoon and only regretted that he could n't carry ten thousand tons. The Pamir was down in the water to her hawse-holes and crawled like a tortoise in a nasty summer sea. It was n't like being in an opera-glass case, but we did n't give a hang because this time we were of some use.

In New York, during a tack he made up Broadway and in the swell district with Villiers, Fourgues ran into old Flannigan. I told you about meeting him in Norway last year. They all came on board in the middle of the night, a dark brown taste in their mouths, making noise enough to wake a cemetery, carrying a gramophone they had pinched in a bar. They set to playing cake-walks and negro melodies on the disks which they had also taken, and I got up at two o'clock because sleep was no longer possible. As Flannigan was to leave the next morning for the Scandinavian countries, and as he said he was going to make a trip in *Bochie*, he stayed on board until six or seven, drinking Dubonnet and seltzer to furbish

up his palate and relating his campaigns to Fourgues and Villiers, who poured down quarts and quarts of Vichy to wash out all the drugs they had just put into their stomachs.

Flannigan denies it, but we are sure that he has already been in Germany and that it's not from a great distance that he learns all he tells. But, of course, there's no way of proving it with a neutral as long as the official policy of the Entente is to let the Boches carry on their little intrigues while the papers say the blockade is perfect, and that the Germans are tightening their belts, and that to-morrow they are going to come out crying "Kamerad" with their mouths open so we can put in a crust. That's not Flannigan's opinion, nor ours either, nor that of any one in traffic. But I'll go on with what Flannigan said: —

"The Boches are not eating as much as before, that's certain, but everybody knows they still eat too much, and a lot of good things to eat are allowed to get in by way of Switzerland, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries.

"The land is also still there. It produces less because the able men are at the front, but even if it produced only half as much as formerly, there would still be no famine. The Germans make music about it for the benefit of foreigners, but they are perfectly tranquil, and they know that England has only two tenths of her territory under cultivation for food, and that if her provisions are cut off, she is the one who

will tighten her belt. They also know that they have torn the best coal-mines from France and Russia; that Italy, Russia, and France depend on what is sent to them by sea. To meet that situation the Boches are preparing something decisive in the way of submarine warfare. In 1915 they established a programme of construction, and when that programme is executed they will declare submarine war to the death. As they had only twenty or thirty submarines at the declaration of war, they were not ready then for submarine fighting, but they can be relied on not to have neglected the idea in advance if they believed it worth while.

"As they soon saw that it was their best chance, they went to work with determination, and submarines are now being turned out. They will be armed with big guns, will run faster than cargo boats, and can stay out twenty or thirty days without difficulty. There will be others for mine-laying, to sow all the good routes with mines. All will be able to cut nets and to rest on the bottom."

Flannigan says this is current conversation in Germany, and that even if the official people in France and England don't believe what they say publicly, — that is, that it's all bluff, — they had better get ready for something nasty, for when the Germans once let loose they will go it as hard as they did when they let loose on land. Flannigan embroidered this theme for three or four hours and I can't remember all the figures he gave. Villiers wrote down some at

the time to pass on to pals in France, which will be of no use in the world, he says, as the order of the day is to say that there are n't any submarines.

The Pamir left New York the same day that Flannigan sailed. We took a fellow on there, a civil engineer who had gone over to America to take charge of orders for munitions, steel, etc., and who seized the chance to accompany the steel bars he had been inspecting in the factory. His name is Mousseaux. He had had nothing to do with the sea before the war, but has now made several voyages, to Serbia, Russia, Spain, and America, so is not altogether an elephant. He told us a lot of stories about munitions, the markets, orders, and the Boches, and I opine that Mousseaux also thinks that if we win a victory it won't be by turning our backs. He's a sharp one, a big, blond, blue-eyed Norman. In short, a sturdy fellow.

He rather went up in the air when he saw that the Pamir had neither wireless, guns, nor anything else against submarines. But as he had telegraphed from inland that he would take passage with us and as he arrived the morning we sailed, he would n't back out, but swallowed the pill, especially as he was going to gain four or five days thereby. Ships don't go as you please to France at present. Moreover, it was his twelfth voyage since the beginning of the war and he had been on boats without wireless or guns eight times. Like all those who roll around at sea, he thinks as we do, and we soon agreed that the mer-

chant marine of the Allies is almost offered at present to the Boche submarines and that it will last as long as it lasts. He, an engineer, assures us that the cost of installing wireless on all the boats would be slight and that the price of one big well-loaded bark, sunk because it had no warning, would cover the cost of wireless for at least a hundred and fifty or two hundred cargoes. Mousseaux adds that some one with a hard fist is needed to compel the owners and administrators of the merchant marine and everybody else to get together and that then it would take only about a month. But now no one dares go ahead and it's going to cost the country tens of millions.

Fourgues and Mousseaux almost fell out when Mousseaux asked what it meant to put guns aft and none forward on the cargo boats that had them. Fourgues asked him what he meant by that.

"Yes," answered Mousseaux, "I have been on several boats which had one gun — behind."

"*Dame!*" said Fourgues; "they could n't have asked the advice of the captain. But if they ever give me a gun, I suppose it will be surrounded by a lot of fellows from the navy who will put it aft because the policy of the Entente is to be on the defensive as regards submarines."

"But, captain, the only way to demolish them is to attack — go straight for them the moment you meet them."

"That's your idea and we all think so too. Please tell that in Paris to whomever it may concern. You'll

make one more to be told to shut up about something that concerns him, for the password is to run away — yes, sir — to run away — at sight — and to fire from behind if one has time. As for attacking — strictly forbidden, not on the programme!"

"But, captain, how can we say that we have the mastery of the sea if our ships must run and never show fight?"

"Yes, how can we? I ask you the same question! They cram millions of tons of merchandise into us, saying, 'Carry it to Europe; you have nothing to fear!' Every day we learn of a comrade who has drunk the *bouillon*, but it seems that he did n't count, and if we are lucky enough to meet a submarine, we must n't hurt it. Leave it alone or turn your backs, like *des jean-foutres!*

"And if we get a dose of their medicine? Look at my masts — we have n't even four wires to send a radio to comrades in the same latitude! It would n't give any one meningitis to discover what merchant ships need! The syndicate of captains is asking for it in every tone of voice and it 's as plain as the nose on your face! But everybody knows that we won't go on strike, and the big vegetables either say that we are regular dare-devils or else that we are rebels. So it 's go ahead or give up, and we go ahead — and every one of us knows that he 's going down when his turn comes."

"And it 's all the worse, captain, — though I don't wish to criticise the merchant marine, — because

the passengers are sure to be drowned if the ships are torpedoed. On the Pamir you have two lifeboats, which might be enough for your forty men. But I have crossed on ships with a thousand or twelve hundred in the crew and no means of saving but four or five hundred. As a rule, half the lifeboats — all those on the side which goes up in the air after the torpedoing — are of no use; so you can see that it takes courage to go to sea and that it's folly to send whole regiments without protection. After so many months of war the civilians still find it amusing. If things were like that on land, the parliaments or the newspapers would have had them changed long ago. But, knowing nothing of seafaring, the country swallows any story it's told. And you're in luck that it does n't know anything."

"Thunder and blazes!" answered Fourgues. "You call that luck? It means breaking your head against the compass! It's worse than you think. After all, I don't give a damn; we're among friends and can speak plainly. Do you believe that the navy has yet given orders for information to be posted up on transports, telling passengers what to do in case of submarines? No? They take passage like sheep, carrying the latest newspaper saying that it's a joke. And when they are torpedoed, it's butchery, sir, it's massacre; and there's nothing to say because if it's that way, it's because that's the way they want it! And what do you expect them to do, these hundreds of elephants, when the ship begins to rock? No one has

told them anything. They don't know anything. They run around, braying like asses, jumping into lifeboats, cutting ropes — and the drowned are charged up to profit and loss! If a single general treated our soldiers like that, he would be sent to Limoges first and then court-martialled."

Do you take in Fourgues' tone? As a rule we don't occupy ourselves on the Pamir with land affairs and politics. The sea is enough for us. We know that we are being surrounded from day to day and that it comes closer with each voyage, but we can say nothing, do nothing. That's forbidden! . . . Oh, I forgot something that Flannigan told us in New York about the crews of the German submarines. The newspapers and the French authorities say that the good German crews have long since been destroyed and that submarine crews can't be turned out in a day like waffles, so we can be tranquil on that score. Flannigan says that's all humbug. In the first place, with money one can get what one wants in any country and the Germans pay their submarine crews royally. And then everybody knows that there are only two fellows who have to understand the whole business — the captain and the mate who have charge of the submersing and steering. As to the crew, they have their posts as mechanics with the fly-wheels, levers, and valves, just as in any factory, and merely execute the orders of the two heads — turn the one at the right, empty the one at the left, drive ahead in the centre. It would n't take forever to learn that!

Any mechanic would be up on it in a month and so they have fine crews like those on the Zeppelins. There's only the risk. But I'd like to know in what country danger stops the fellows with nerve? Neither in France nor in *Bochie!* Moreover, Flannigan said, after the submarine crews have drudged for fifteen or twenty days at sea, they are given leave in port and spend a week or two with their families while the machinery is put in order by others. And they are treated like heroes and fêted everywhere, as well as given their part in the prize-money and for the destruction, so that candidates are refused, just as in the French aviation service — where, of course, you may break your head, but only after having had a chance at the enemy.

And Flannigan also said that the German admiralty does n't restrict the submarine commanders on the pretext that they are young. It drops the reins on their necks, sends them out with full power and does n't bother any more about what they do nor about the papers they make out. Well, we can expect something dirty! If a quarter of that were done for the French, I believe we could hook the moon.

At Brest our steel was not unloaded very fast, but that's the rule. And what a *chic* harbor! It would hold all the boats of Europe and America and as it's the nearest to the United States, from twelve to twenty-four hours could be saved on all transatlantic voyages. Fourgues pretends that it takes the French not to use such a port. It's because we are

too rich, he says. If the Germans or the English or the Yankees had Brest, they would make the first transatlantic port of the world out of it, surpassing Hamburg, Rotterdam, London, Liverpool, and New York all together. But the navy does n't wish this, so the Atlantic freight and our good money go elsewhere.

At Brest there were a lot of boats starting for Archangel with material which will probably get lost in Manchuria or Thibet. Flannigan told us how the Czar is surrounded with a whole clique who are at work for the Boches. Fourgues would have liked to have the Pamir make the little Russian trip of last year all over again, but they sent us to Cardiff with orders to get coal and we sailed in ballast according to custom. It annoys Fourgues now to carry coal as it's some time since the Pamir has carried any but clean cargoes, but we knew why it was Cardiff — the owner is back of that. I understand that nowadays there's a profit in coal and the Pamir will have paid for herself with this voyage. She can sink now! Fourgues and I, having done our utmost — the owner can offer us cigars at a franc apiece!

We almost did get sunk off Sallys on leaving Cardiff for Genoa. It was between two and three in the afternoon, during Fourgues' watch. The Pamir struck something which shook her from the keel to the masthead, but whatever it was, it did n't explode. Perhaps it was a submarine which suddenly knew the worst! Or perhaps a mine that did n't go

off. Nothing happened to us except that we have forty tons of water a day in the hold and must keep the pump going all the time. As we still have coal on board I can't tell you what's the matter, but it's serious. Fourgues and Villiers think that we can keep on to France in order to get into dock there, but day after to-morrow when we empty out our coal, we shall know what has been smashed. From Cardiff to Genoa it rained cats and dogs the entire time. Never have we had such a wet passage. Good weather in other respects. Not a single patrol-boat except at Gibraltar. We are n't astonished to find no patrol-boats, but it's false to say that the routes are guarded.

At Genoa we loafed around for four days. There was a mistake regarding the destination of the coal, which was for factories at Naples and Rome. Visited the city and vicinity. They don't worry in Italy. At bottom, old man, France is the only country that is really getting it in this war — in men, territory, money, and effort.

We cleared from Genoa for Naples, where they are worrying even less. It's not mentioned, but there are several classes not yet mobilized. Of course it's none of my business. I am at home in the merchant marine, but when it comes to other things, perhaps I'm absurd. We anchored in the port, between two warships which are not in the Strait of Otranto. Our coal was unloaded so-so.

To speak of other matters, they say that Rumania

is going to get into the game and there is talk of Italy declaring war on Germany. Fourgues says that means at least six months more of war. *Alors quoi*, the more Allies there are, the longer it will last? . . .

Upon which, old man, I shake your hand. Villiers and Fourgues are going to take me to a music-hall in Tobdo Street this evening to see if I am a real fire-proof *fiancé*, as they call it. I shall be awfully bored. If we go into dry-dock at home, I will send you a telegram by way of the Navy Department and if the Auvergne is in France, come to La Rochelle right away so I can embrace you the first after my wife.

Marseilles, October, 1916

My Old Pal, —

Happy people have no history. You have left for Argostoli or Piræus and I received your telegram on my wedding-day. My wife, who is with me at Marseilles, sends you warm greetings with her regrets that you were not there. Fourgues came. He made a little speech which fairly doubled us up and presented me with a fine lamp of wrought-iron. Villiers gave me a love of a narghile with two tubes, to soothe my wife and me if we quarrel. I thank you for the present which you say is coming. The Pamir is in dock and will be ready in four or five days. *Au revoir*, old man. I am as happy as a king and I hope the same for you when your turn comes.

Marseilles, October 30, 1916

MY DEAR FRIEND, —

My wife left yesterday for La Rochelle, as the Pamir was to have quitted Marseilles yesterday evening. But we were delayed, Fourgues having been mistaken about the cargo. So I am writing again, having sent you a little letter and having received a long one from you. I don't want to seem to preach, but — get married! Find a woman you like and then go right ahead with your eyes shut. Take my word for it, for fellows like us, who have a different lot from these sheltered land-lubbers, it's a revelation and the true happiness. I am no longer the same, and this is not an exaggeration. If it were otherwise I should tell you. But my heart is wrung because Marguerite left yesterday and because the Pamir must get under way so soon. To have a young girl all for yourself, to listen to the things she says, that no one has ever heard before, and then to go away to sea — it's something that can't be described.

Add to this the war and the mines and the submarines! Fourgues is quite right — no man knows what he has in him till he gets a wife, a real one, and leaves her. What a profession ours is! Life seems so beautiful — one launches into it like a ship on the sea. But when, to support a wife you adore, you have to earn a living at the price of never being with her, it's the worst of all. Yesterday, at the station, she went and I was left on the platform. She implored

me to be prudent, to save myself if the Pamir should sink, to forget my *amour-propre* and that I was an officer, and to think of her. I swore! But you know what professional honor is. I knew I was lying. I knew that if the catastrophe came, the sailor would supplant the husband. What an atrocious parting! We love each other so much that we did not dare speak of it: the sea was between us. I suffered like one of the damned. I wonder if I did right to marry her during the war. Later, there will be no torpedoes or submarines — we could accept our separation with more patience. But now! Now I am afraid for my skin! My skin might pass. But she! My body goes away, but all the rest stays with her. And if I go down, what will be my last thoughts? I shall see her at La Rochelle, waiting for me and wringing her hands, and she will never know whether I am dead or not. It is atrocious. Don't marry before peace. I swore to her that the submarines were a joke. But you and I know well that they are there — and everywhere — and that we've nothing against them on the Pamir. The people on land are sending us to the slaughter-house. Have they no mothers, no wives or daughters or sisters — those who refuse us guns and wireless? They chant about the glory of France and they strangle Frenchmen like that fellow in the Bible who offered up his son. The sea and the torpedoes have made me afraid, my poor friend. I am afraid — afraid.

Marseilles, November 2, 1916

Forgive me, my poor friend, for my letter of day before yesterday. I was going through a crisis. I hope you will never have to experience anything similar. But one comprehends things when one has adopted a second self for life and desires the happiness of that second self. It's all over now. The Pamir is taking on stuff for the Army of the Orient and for the naval army which is at Saloniki. So the shop claims me and calms me. My wife writes such pretty letters. She is not so troubled now as when she was here. I'm getting along, old man. I went through a bad typhoon, but it's over now. You must have laughed at me. Did n't you?

I read Fourgues and Villiers your response to the battle of Jutland and the matter of the big warships. It pleased them. They understood very well when you said that all the young navy knows that big dreadnoughts are of no use except to pass men up to the next grade. That's plain.

Villiers says that it's a matter of psychology, but that it's necessary to be on the inside to understand it. You, who are on the inside, explain it very well. In this naval war there are the young who do the daily work, just like merchant vessels, but they don't count. And then there are the big vegetables who hold together so that each may get his stripe or his pay or decoration. It's very simple, thanks to your account of it. The Pamir is advised hence-

forth, and that's all that's necessary as long as we don't go down!

We carry flour, shells, guns, — perishable and non-perishable material, — *toute la lyre*. At this moment, my poor friend, my pen is writing to you, my body is here, but my heart is at La Rochelle and I know that it's all up with me now, that I would give the whole war for one trip down there. Of course, I wish for our victory; but if the Pamir is ever torpedoed and sinks, you can believe that I shall go to the bottom cursing eternally all those whom I did not know, who left us without defence.

Je t'embrasse.

Argostoli, December 16, 1916

My Old Pal, —

Going from Marseilles to Saloniki, before reaching Matapan, the Pamir was torpedoed — fired upon and missed — by a Boche submarine. At bottom, we should n't mind being sent down if we could hit back and if all precautions had been taken. When a *poilu* gets a bullet in an assault, if he has time to know about it before he dies, he sees that his pals are getting over and that gives him heart to cast off. But as for us, old man, it's not our fault nor that of the submarine if I am writing you to-day. Some are unlucky and some are lucky, and that's the way things are! It was early morning, during my watch, when we began getting their sugar-plums. The weather was like the Last Judgment, and I was looking at

the roll of the surge, which was making a sound like *plouf !* on the stem and which ran away covered with foam. All of a sudden there were columns of foam, climbing up and up like aigrettes on the port side at about three hundred yards. They mounted as high as our smokestacks. I said, "Hell! We're near some rocks and the sea is breaking over them!" I put the helm to port and went to look at the chart. There were no more rocks marked down there than in the white of my eye. So I put back to the route after having sent word to Fourgues that there was something funny on the sea, and just as he reached the bridge a bunch of shells fell twenty yards to starboard. There was no doubt about it, — there was a submarine squirting at us, and we with our arms folded, unable to answer back! But anyway, we should have been at a loss, for it was almost ten minutes before we knew from where or what they came. The Pamir was rolling like a beast and there was a chop like a lot of little onions. It must have been that which embarrassed the submarine, for the shots fell in front, behind, to the right, and to the left.

Finally, during a little calm, we saw flakes of smoke three or four miles ahead and spray breaking about the Boche. Then we turned our backs and cut through the foam as fast as we could. I could n't possibly tell you all the "thunders and blazes" that Fourgues let out! I did n't count them. He stamped and pulled at his goatee: —

"Do you see that devil sending us prunes while we sit here like eunuchs? But then, if they had given us guns they would have been pea-shooters or cock-tail-straws and could n't have carried more than four or five thousand yards. Look at her! She's at least seven thousand yards off and is missing us only because of the swell. If it were calm we should be done for already!"

At the end of a quarter of an hour we had counted about forty shells, and the submarine stopped wasting her pills and bore down on us at full speed, and you can believe, old man, that she gained on us hand over hand.

The Pamir, loaded with about three thousand five hundred, was smashed down into the trough like a piece of lead and could n't give more than seven knots if she broke her neck and demolished everything on the deck. The Boche shot through the water like an anchovy. They must have closed her hatches and, of course, she did n't mind the waves breaking over her, being built to navigate with water on all sides. She must have gained three or four knots on us, for after she 'd chased us for three quarters of an hour we saw her slow up a bit and open the hatches and there were the gunners coming to fire from the deck! The first two shots fell twenty yards short and fifty over. Fourgues said to himself that the third was going to hit and he put the helm hard to starboard at full speed so that we should swerve. Just at that moment a wave, hollowed out like

a spoon, came along and shook us so that we thought we were going to make the somersault then and there. Everything on the deck began to slide and the truss got blocked on the port side. There was no way of steering any more! The Pamir kept turning around to port, only she could n't turn fast on account of the heavy sea, but the submarine doubtless believed that it was in order to run her down that we headed that way, so the Boche gunners scrambled through the hatches and shut them and they submerged on the spot. After that, not a thing to be seen! While our crew was hauling the cases around on the deck, trying to free the truss, the Pamir went on around and around like a donkey in a merry-go-round, and rolled and pitched without stopping. Then the submarine must have come nearer, for we saw the wakes of two torpedoes, one forward at about thirty yards and another which missed us aft. The second was well aimed and came straight at us. We could move neither hand nor foot, nor do anything but make the sign of the cross and think of our families. But this torpedo could n't have been set to go very deep. The Pamir not being armored, a hole at the water-line would be enough to finish her. Well, the torpedo got caught in the trough of a hollow wave which made it leap in the air like a carp about a hundred yards from us and fall back into the water at right angles to its course. It passed behind us while we all said *ouf !*

The Boche must have been disgusted at losing two torpedoes and nearly fifty shells in one hour on a

boat that acted like a cork. She came to the surface again at two or three thousand yards without sending us anything more and pedalled away toward another ship coming from the west, the Worthminster, a big English water-bruiser loaded with munitions, which had put in at Marseilles and had left the same hour as we, but which had fallen behind so that we lost sight of her the night before. I believe the Worthminster went down. Saloniki was her destination and she did n't arrive there. We asked for news, but mum is the word everywhere, and when there are four Thursdays in a week we shall know, perhaps, if our mates of the Worthminster are feeding the crabs.

You can be sure Fourgues made the noise of an orchestra because the Pamir had not been able to send a radiogram to the Worthminster, which had wireless, as we had seen at Marseilles. To see a submarine running after a brother and not to be able to say, "Turn back to the west ! Shells and torpedoes are coming!" — admit that it's something to make one groan with despair! If only our truss had n't been stuck, Fourgues would have chased after the Boche at the risk of getting some prunes, because the Worthminster would have seen that something was up and would have disappeared. But it took two hours to free the truss and repair it and stop turning in circles. So Fourgues followed his route, signalling that he had seen a Boche submarine near Matapan; all the boats we met bore south. Those who came

behind us were sunk, I suppose, without any one being able to help it.

At Saloniki, the naval authorities put a hundred thousand questions to Fourgues about the adventure. As the Pamir had received no damage in the hull or dead-work they tried to tell Fourgues that it was a pipe-dream and that he had seen no more submarine than in the crook of his elbow. He was so indignant that he did n't even get into a rage.

"That's all right," he said. "If it's necessary to let yourself be sent to the bottom in order to prove that you have seen one, next time I will stop and wait for that and then perhaps you'll believe me. In any case you will get confirmation from the Worthminster which —"

They certainly bit at the name of the Worthminster and that makes us sure that she is lost. But they would n't give any information. They merely questioned Fourgues: —

"Why did n't you warn the Worthminster?"

"No wireless."

"Why did n't you run after the submarine?"

"Truss stuck and damaged."

"Why did n't you attack the submarine?"

"No guns and a high sea."

"Why did n't you signal the Worthminster?"

"She was at the horizon and it was raining. You could n't have seen a flag at five hundred yards."

And so forth and so on. Fourgues left abruptly, filing a written statement, and saying that as the folks

who are drowned are blamed and the landsmen find fault with them, he would wash his hands of the whole business, and the next time he would let the submarine go ahead in order to settle the account and shut them up. But that, old man, was the bad humor of the moment, for he does n't want the Pamir to be a landmark on the bottom any more than I do.

While we were unloading our stuff for the Army of the Orient, there were not a few cargo boats in the harbor, and one day Fourgues invited the captains of all of them to a luncheon. As he is very popular, we were a tableful of about fifteen or twenty, all fellows of brawn and nerve who have knocked about from north to south ever since the beginning of the war, with millions of tons of merchandise in the hold, or any number of soldiers. It was a treat to hear such conversation from these men who really work and who are n't afraid of anything. And then, between sailors there's no posing. And Fourgues, who presided, does n't swallow shams like a cabin-boy. So each told his little story when his turn came, without trying to stuff anybody. They had all been more or less attacked, torpedoed or bombarded, but they had escaped, because they were there! They said, though, that the game of skittles was beginning seriously, and that sooner or later no one would get through without some mischance. There were some who had wireless and guns; only, their guns did n't shoot as far as those of the submarines which had attacked them, and when they called for hours by wireless to warn

others of danger, no one answered. There were some with wireless and no guns, and as they had only one operator, and one man is only one man and can't stay with the receiver at his ear twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four without going crazy, their ships have not been informed of danger and have sometimes barely escaped. There were others who had guns and no wireless, but their guns were cast-offs which got clogged at the third shot, so it was just the same as though they had n't any. And then there were those who had neither guns nor wireless, like the Pamir. These were in the majority and their only response to a submarine is to make their wills. To talk about such a state of things is not exactly merry, and without Fourgues, who was in fine form that day, it might have turned into a regular funeral ceremony; all the more so as they also spoke of their lifeboats, which are insufficient everywhere; of their engines, out of breath as soon as you start them, though it's swim or sink; of their ships, which hold together only because they have strong characters, but which are coming unpasted in all the corners; in short, old man, all the miseries which you have known in the past, but which are nothing but a joke compared with the present mess.

During coffee, Fourgues wound up by saying that as no one concerned himself with cargo boats and transports as long as the sailors kept still, perhaps it was time for the mercantile officers and captains to say what should be done and get together so as to dis-

cuss and decide on some line of action. They all agreed and made a *topo*, which they engaged themselves to ask their colleagues to sign wherever they went, and also arranged to send a delegation to Paris as soon as possible. You can well believe, old man, that they have n't much hope of its coming to anything. They will be told to go and let themselves be sunk, and that no one asked for their advice, and what does it mean when the people who do the work try to give their opinion about it? As the country is so ignorant, and as it is being assured that all goes well at sea, all the satisfaction the captains will have will lie in thinking they were right, and when they arrive in port, of counting up their little comrades who have drunk the bouillon. Amen and glory be to those who are torpedoed!

If I had the time and knew how, I could tell you a lot of interesting things about Saloniki that happened while we were there: Venizelos, the movement forward from the coast by Monastir, the National Government, etc. You may be sure there is stir and gossip! But I should need whole logs to tell about it, and then, outside of my profession, I am afraid of saying stupid things. Anyway, the Army of the Orient was glad to get our cargo from Marseilles — material for the railroad, tractors, pneumatics, gun-carriages, and gasoline. When ships are late, operations are retarded in proportion. If a ship is sunk, they have to wait for its substitute before they can go ahead. The stock must be replaced in France,

sent to Marseilles, another boat found and loaded, which makes a month's delay without counting that something is always missing from the second shipment, some nothing at all that is enough to keep a vehicle or a gun or a railroad from going. There's nothing of this at the front in France. There, they have only to telephone to the rear in order to get what they want. Here, when you have n't a thing, you have n't it and that's all there is about it. But the French papers are howling that they are letting the grass grow under their feet! I'm only the mate on the Pamir, but I'd rather have my job than the one Sarrail has.

From Saloniki we went to Piræus, Salamis, and all around there to deliver spare stores and supplies to the ships of the navy: screws, boiler-tubes, electric cables, torpedoes, sheet-iron, and tools — a regular hardware shop! We went from one anchorage to another, spitting out a few tons here and a few there, and picking up scraps of stories about the 1st of December at Athens, red-hot, all of them. Don't expect, though, that I will blab any of it to you. The mails are n't safe. But it is n't the things that really happen that count — it's what is said officially. Fourgues maintains that it's very philosophical: only the official folks have any interest in telling lies for their own protection and they alone believe the lies they tell. He adds that this war, no matter where you turn, is the Triumph of the Lie! He knows how to say things! While the Pamir was making her little Odyssey — as

Villiers called it — in the Greek ports, we three asked ourselves again of what use those great warships were, with their thousands of crew and their enormous guns. If it's for our prestige in the Orient, one day like the 1st of December can wipe out the effect of a thousand battleships. If it's for a naval battle, then against whom? The Austrians? In that case there's no need of keeping more than twice as many ships as the Austrians have, and it would be better to dismantle the other French ships, which are devouring coal and stupefying tens of thousands of sailors with idleness who would be much better on trawlers and little patrol-boats. With one great unused hulk they could arm ten or fifteen that would be of some use. If all they want is to give the Boches targets worth their trouble when the big ships go to be keeled in France or Bizerta — why not in Kamchatka? — well, Italy is close by and we understand. But it does n't concern me, of course, and, indeed, I have enough with the Pamir and navigation.

At Argostoli, where they sent us to empty our holds for the battleships which were there, we kept on thinking the same things. Crews and young officers bored to death and eating their hearts out in their longing for active service, the only service possible nowadays for marines — submarine-chasing in little boats! Ah, well, perhaps you think that everybody could n't do that. So, to make it look as though they were doing something, they keep up a lot of drill, as in time of peace. *Dame!* But what do you expect?

There is n't any war for them except that perhaps they may be torpedoed, and, of course, they must look as though they were of some use! So here is another French force lying idle and one of prime quality — nothing but big, husky boys who ask only to leave their boats and go into danger! They are n't like the fellows who want to quit the trenches in order to make money far from the shells. Sailors would like to go on the real sea and just be paid as much as before. But whether they want to or not, it's all the same. Communications are cut off between them and France, where no one knows a thing about the marine and cares as little as about Siam.

And, say, if they did n't fall on our necks at Argostoli to get the latest news from Athens and the navy, from which we had come, straight! They know nothing here, or almost nothing. So at first, Fourgues, Villiers, and I began to wind off what we knew with a free hand, believing that they asked questions in order to know. No use, my friend! All the chiefs opened their eyes wide and then told us to go to h——. France can let a hundred men and six officers be killed like rats caught in a trap, but no one must say how it was done. So Fourgues and the two of us put our tongues in a corner with a quid on top, and we replied to the young, who had bits of the story, that we were not in a position to tell what we knew. So there you have us in the rôle of censors, old man! It fits us about as well as gloves do a turtle! But as adventures are the forming influence of youth, after

this adventure I understand the censorship, though I never understood it before. The censorship, old man, is to keep people from being nauseated — not the people at the front or on the sea, who could n't be any sicker after the truth than they are after a shell or a torpedo, but the potentates who get advancement or a reputation through the war and who don't want you to put your nose into their business. But to think that a country like ours, where every one lets his head be broken, — laughing, — should be treated like that to cover a gang that can't see ahead! It's enough to make you laugh till the Last Judgment!

All the same, it's more or less droll to see how the inhabitants of this country have made game of us behind our backs ever since the 1st of December. How are they going to be made to sweat ten times the blood of those French sailors? There is no exterior influence that holds! They wink an eye, well knowing that not one of us will hurt their darling Constantine. But French blood is French business, and we could say to all the rest, "Hands off! Let *me* settle this score!" And then we should n't have to look for noon at fourteen o'clock with all those folks who admire nothing but the big stick, the proof of which is that they are down on their knees with their mouths open before the Boches. But we keep on gargling with the memories of ancient days, and all these Helleno-Boches, who are well aware of our stupidity, play the same violin and roll up their eyes. Are we

really such born fools as to be taken in by that old song?

Fourgues explained it all to me in three words, as he knows how: —

"Listen to this, my boy. There are adventurers, crooks who intend to marry the lady with the dough. So they recite poetry, purse their lips, and strike romantic poses. The good woman lets herself be taken in and goes before the mayor, her pennies close behind. And what does she get? He, the tender heart, beats her, makes off with the money, and then laughs at her to complete the sum. Well, the Greek Government and the Allies are out of the same cask. They play us the orchestra of their great ancestors Themistocles and Kanaris, and when we come with our hand held out, it's good for a hundred massacred soldiers! If we kicked them in return, it might go. But we say, 'Let's talk it over!' So everybody sits down in a circle on the corpses and it's French blood that makes the council table! If instead of this we said to them, 'Constantine or bread!' and sealed their ports while we have ships doing nothing, in a week we should be rid of those lads who fire in our backs, cut our bridges, and get their instructions from Potsdam every morning. But what do you expect, my boy? The Frenchman lets himself be killed and then says, 'Pardon me!' At least, that's the doctrine!"

Well, old man, I don't know just who Themistocles and Kanaris were, — old rascals, probably, — but the rest is as plain as day. What are they saying about

it in France? Even here, only two days from Piræus, there's no way in which we of the Pamir, who were there, can make ourselves heard. From that, what must it be at home?

Well, hang it all! The Pamir is waiting for orders. It's a habit now! Fourgues is afraid they will make us take coal, seeing that that commodity is now dearer than mutton.

But I don't give a whoop nor a damn nor a double-damn! And if you are n't like me, your stripes have indeed changed you. Shake.

Norway, February 13, 1917

My dear Old Godfather, —

I am sure you are stunned by the above form of address. However, it's not so far wrong. There's going to be a little conscript — or a little mamma — for the class of 1937 who will look like me, I hope, and you are official godfather. Now, no objections! I heard about it only the other day on our arrival in Bergen. The letter had been chasing around after me for two months, but we have rolled about so during that time — and then, too, the censor held up the letters in Greece — that it's a perfectly new future papa who sends you this announcement. If you don't congratulate me, you are no brother of mine!

That will do for family history. But you know such a thing does n't happen every day in a man's life. Don't think I'm bragging because there's going to be a little post-card for which I made the design. No,

old man, I'm not trying to crush you. Just do the same when you can — and if you can — and we'll call it square. And if you have the luck to be the first to see my little mosquito, embrace the mother and the baby for me. You know that I mean it with all my heart.

It's so long since I wrote you last, that I can't remember where I posted the letter. I believe you were in the dock at Bizerta and I was waiting at Argostoli. If I repeat myself, pass over that part and begin where I left off.

Here is where we have been: Argostoli, Messina, Ajaccio (but that was extra as you shall see), Lisbon, Bilbao, Brest, Liverpool, Bergen, and the Norwegian ports where the Pamir is collecting wood. And we have neither moulded at sea nor in port, as you will also learn. This time our work has been useful, and except for the German blockade which finds us in Norway, everything is going well. But I will do as Villiers does when he argues — take one thing at a time!

At Argostoli there were three other water-bruisers which left at the same time as the Pamir, or very nearly, and we were supposed to travel together to join a big cruiser west of Cerigo in order to make up a convoy with other boats which the cruiser had collected at Saloniki, Salamina, and elsewhere. There was one destroyer, the Revolver, to escort the lot of us. As you might guess, the convoy was composed of hookers, some of which made eight knots and others

fourteen, and as we all met in the night, the next morning some were lost over the horizon ahead and others behind. We patched it up as we could and followed the secret route.

Near morning of the second day, the cruiser hoisted a lot of signals to tell us to head south because a submarine had been travelling on the secret route during the night. So we all stampeded for the south, the fastest ahead, the lumberers behind, and the Pamir well in the middle. It was worth a place to see that hurdle race!

The cruiser had orders to touch at Messina or somewhere along that coast, but had neglected to tell us, so she collected us as well as she was able and conducted us into the Strait of Messina, where we found ourselves all in a bunch about noon. And if there had been a submarine looking on, she could n't have missed us any more than she could have missed an elephant in a window.

There the cruiser and the destroyer signalled good-bye and gave us the order to follow the route as far as Marseilles, where each should repair to his destination according to secret orders. But as there was no police, the fast boats put on speed, the others dragged, and on arriving before Bonifacio, the Pamir had no one in sight but a big steamer which disappeared off the horizon ahead that night.

We kept on all night, and the next morning what did Fourgues see? The same big steamer disabled, having received a torpedo in the rudder and screw,

and asking to be towed. As she had a gun, Fourgues thought she must have peppered the submarine, which had probably run off to wait for the others who were coming along the same course. The submarine had, perhaps, missed us by an hour or an hour and a half at most, but we saw nothing of her while we were overhauling the steamer Sainte-Eulalie, nor while we were towing her into Ajaccio. It was n't easy to pass the tow-line, for there was a remnant of mistral and the Sainte-Eulalie, had got into the trough. One of our men had his paw smashed by the first hawser, which broke. The second held, and the Pamir towed the cripple to Ajaccio at five knots' speed. There we unloaded our wounded man.

The convoy being dispersed, there was no need to go to Marseilles, so Fourgues lit out straight for Lisbon. At Argostoli they had told him to go there, but he permitted himself the luxury of sailing outside the secret route. When I say outside, I mean about fifty miles off, except at Gibraltar, where, of course, everybody has to pass. But if the navy is incapable of guarding Gibraltar, there's nothing to do but pull up the ladder and order the funeral wreath.

Fourgues said that voyages at sea begin to offer a little too much variety for him to follow secret routes, and as he was not absolutely forced to do so, he would look a little farther and avoid submarines. So he struck the Spanish coast a little south of Baleares and we hugged the shore as far as Lisbon.

He also said that perhaps it made him lose a day,

but that there is less danger near the coast, for if you are torpedoed, you have time to get the boat on shore and save it subsequently, or, at any rate, the crew and lifeboats are almost sure to be saved, having only to make a few strokes of the oar to gain land. Fourgues added that this ought to be the general rule.

At Lisbon we coaled, and the Pamir took the stuff the Portuguese navy gave us for the expeditionary corps Portugal is forming in France. We were well received in Lisbon — not as in the other Allied Countries, where it's neither fish not flesh. The Portuguese are frank. They are n't rich and their army is not immense, but they ask only to strike at the Boches and demolish them, which ought to be the ideal of all the Allies, instead of making shady combinations like some.

We filled only our aft hold at Lisbon with Portuguese war material, going on to Bilbao to stuff the forward hold with steel. It did n't take long at all. The Spanish — I mean the Spanish ship-owners — have begun to be reluctant about shipping us ore; for they say the Boches are going to send all ships to the bottom and Spain does n't want to lose her fleet. So they ask formidable prices entailing negotiations without end, while the ore piles up on the docks. That's why the Pamir loaded so fast.

I'm going at top speed because I want to get to the present business and the story of Norway, and the mail-boat leaves day after to-morrow. We lit out

for Brest, where the Pamir left the Portuguese stuff and the Spanish metal. During the passage we sailed near a wreck, or rather fifty wrecks, — wood, billets, logs, buoys, etc., — which occupied a half-mile of the sea. Fourgues had us search all the afternoon to see if we could find a raft or the lifeboats of the broken ship. But it must have been some such stroke as the Suffren, which left nothing but her absence as proof of shipwreck. We collected nothing. When you pass dramas like that and tell yourself that your turn is coming, perhaps in quarter of an hour, — well, you don't applaud our naval policy as they did recently in Paris.

When they had emptied out our junk at Brest, the Pamir waited a day at most and was sent to Norway to look for wood in the shape of planks and joists. It must be that there are n't so many boats left over now, although the papers say that a thousand come and go each week and that the submarine war has proved a fiasco for the Boches. At the beginning of the war they never minded letting the Pamir lay by in port for eight or ten days. But now — *galop!* All the other fellows we have seen are closing their ranks too. It will go on as it can and then, at some given moment, it will have to stop. And then they'll begin to tighten by one notch on the food and coal of the country, and then by two and three, while we shall continue to be sent to the bottom. If this would open their eyes at home to the importance of the marine and the need of giving it protection,

it would pass! But you'll see how they'll make the people swallow a new fiction! France is not a maritime country and will always let herself be deceived about the sea. But I am anticipating and talking as though the Boche blockade had already been declared at that time, whereas it has only come about since we reached Norway.

So then, we left Brest. We were ordered to sail by way of the Irish Channel, an old acquaintance of ours since the war. In the Manche, about ten o'clock in the morning, straight ahead of the Pamir I saw a mine which must have become detached from the bottom and which was drifting like a mere stick of wood. If this had happened at night, old man, I should not be writing you nor would any of the rest on board, because it was enough to blow up four Pamirs put together. I swung to starboard. We looked at the mine and admired it and that was all. No gun to send it to the bottom! No wireless with which to inform the authorities at Liverpool of the existence of said mine!

We had to make an exchange of material at Birkenhead and anchored in the Mersey. Unfortunately, Fourgues telegraphed the owner that he was in Liverpool, and the owner, who never loses a chance to round out his savings-account, answered that we must wait forty-eight hours in order to take freight that was urgently needed in Norway. This feverishly awaited freight, old man, was wagon-loads and mountains of sugar, preserves, and jams. It seems that in Nor-

way they are n't afraid to buy things that are worth their weight in gold in France. If you want my opinion, I will say that the thin Norwegians won't be getting stout on that cargo. Farther south there are some mouths open and we worked for them. If one is stupid it's for a long time! The Allies' blockade is like a net with broken meshes, here just as in Greece and other places. But that's another story.

During the crossing from Liverpool to Bergen — which I recommend if you like gymnastics, for we never for one moment ceased rolling from side to side — Villiers amused himself making calculations according to the journal of navigation to see how many miles the Pamir has travelled and how much merchandise she has transported during the thirty months of war. He found that we have made the tour of the globe three and a half times and carried between eighty and a hundred million tons of stuff! We might have exceeded the latter figure if we had not made so many voyages in ballast. But, anyway, such as it is, Fourgues said that the Pamir had done her bit. When you think that the biggest cargo boats can double and treble that record and that France needs it all, you can say that the merchant marine has n't failed her. Oh, my old friend, you know that I am not saying this to brag and make out that we are wonderful fellows! All that is very well for papa's boys who have their photographs taken to put in the papers or for the old codgers who spread themselves in the beer-rooms at Paris. They do something the size of your

finger-nail and make it bulk like the Eiffel Tower. But we who trudge up and down the earth and carry on without any one knowing anything about it and who get reprimanded much oftener than we get paid, without counting this hash of torpedoes and mines, — and not more than eight days' leave in port, — I wonder what the Allies would have done if we had n't been there, right on the job and with our mouths shut? After this if the French people do not come to understand what the merchant marine represents, it is because they have been corked up and sealed with strong glue, and there will be nothing to do but set all the boats adrift and go and plant artichokes in our little villages. Fix it up any way you want to, France needs everybody if she is to win the war, and as there are no railroads to Australia or Argentine or the United States, or to any of the countries which furnish us with raw material, her goose is cooked without the merchant marine. *Mais va-t-on voir s'ils viennent, Jean!* There is no danger of our insisting on all this at Paris and we shall keep on just the same while those gentlemen go right on gargling, some with words and the others with the bank-notes that are bursting their pockets.

At Bergen we emptied out the grub destined for the Boches, and I assure you that our men smashed just as many cases as possible, firing them out onto the dock. The owner will lose nothing by it, though, for you may be perfectly sure that he took all precautions; but at least it makes a little less for the Boches

to cram away in their insides. And while the Pamir was in Bergen, news came of the submarine war which the Boches are going to carry on without mercy — blockade, forbidden zones, no warnings, and the rest of the catalogue. Of course, nobody on the Pamir was really surprised by this story which makes all the Allied big-bugs and the journals scream so loudly. We and all the fellows who blow around at sea, and hear the talk everywhere, have felt the squall coming for ever so long. Only, as we are n't officials, of course we must have been mistaken! Well, the bomb has burst! Who is going to suffer? First, the little boats that go to sea; and then France, who will have to draw in her belt. What will they stand for at home in the way of high prices for coal, flour, butter, and the rest?

We who are used to transporting all that sort of thing know what such a catastrophe means. But the dear public that buys at the corner grocery, and believes those things come there of themselves like the rain and the air they breathe, will be somewhat annoyed. Of course, they won't be told how it came about, and they won't know they are paying double or treble the former prices because ships go down at sea. As usual, they will be served a lot of soapsuds because it's forbidden to give the real reason for anything.

All the same, the censor can't prohibit the cutting-off of the gas, the electricity, the railroads, the restaurants, and everything that makes life easy. For

you may be sure the Boches aren't going to do this with the back of the spoon. Here, so near them, people have information, and we have picked up a good deal at Bergen and Christiansund, where I am writing while our planks and joists are being loaded. It's a good thing that the Pamir came here to get the wood, for all the Norwegian boats have orders to stay wherever they are without stirring, on account of the blockade, and I beg you to believe there are millions of tons of building timber held up. What's going to be done? It was short already! The worst is that the Dutch, the Spanish, and the other neutrals are also going to suspend their traffic because they aren't keen either about losing their ships. Well, the Pamir will have from three thousand to thirty-two hundred tons of wood which will serve to construct the barracks of the *poilus*, the railroads, and the uprights for the trenches of at least one army corps. This is at least as useful as shells and coal and we are pleased with our cargo.

To return to the information we have gathered here, it seems that things are boiling in Russia. A lot of people think that at Petrograd and other places up there it's bad enough to make them submit to German influence. The Germans are putting sticks in their wheels even at court and in the imperial family itself. Some say that it can end only by a separate peace or a revolution. In fact, matters look pretty dark in the opinion of those who have been there.

In Germany they talk of nothing but the submarines, and the public expect wonders. The Norwegians say that the Germans have been turning out several submarines a week for the last few months and that there are many mine-sowers among them. So, as you can believe the Boches will keep their word, navigation is going to be a matter of wolf-traps and we shall be blown up without knowing why or how. The Pamir is nicely fixed for the first voyage after the blockade. She has to sail the entire length of the forbidden zone and our sort of patrol will be little protection. That has not changed at all in thirty months of war! But Fourgues says the Allies are rich enough to pretend that they can stand for it. Let a thousand or five thousand tons be sunk and still they will state in the papers that it's a bluff, he says. But in the end the public will pay. Whether we get through or not is of no importance at all. All that we shall have for our funeral oration will be silence everywhere.

But this is nonsense. I am going to the movies to-night with Villiers, who is giving me a party in honor of my paternity. We shall dine on shore. In three days we shall get under way for an Atlantic port which is not yet fixed. What luck if it were La Rochelle or Saint-Nazaire! I could go and embrace the little mother. Bah! Who lives, learns! Sailors were not meant to be with their families, and as the proverb says, "Sailor's bride, sorrow's bride!" I am sending you my photograph, which I had taken

at Bergen and which I am also sending to my wife so that she can look at me while she is waiting for the baby. You will see that I am well and that the war agrees with me. You know that I mean what I have written on the photo. You are my old brother and here's till we meet again.

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT (end of February, 1917)

We are without news of the Pamir, which the German radiograms describe as torpedoed.

THE END

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